

Doha conference may be scrapped — Arab League

CAIRO (AFP) — The Middle East economic conference scheduled for Qatar in November may yet be cancelled because most Arab countries object to Israel's presence there, an Arab League official said Sunday. "I think it is still possible to forgo holding the summit," the League's assistant secretary general for political affairs, Mohammad Zakariya Ismail, said. "Most Arab countries do not support the holding of the economic summit in the current circumstances surrounding the peace process," he told reporters in Cairo. Mr. Ismail blamed Israel for the crisis in the peace process, calling on the United States to do more to "force Israel to respect the foundations of the peace process instead of simply giving its verbal support."

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation
جوردان تايمز يومية سياسية غير بالإنجليزية عن المؤسسة الصحفية الأردنية، الراي

Kaabneh receives U.S. air force commander

AMMAN (Petra) — Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Field Marshal Abdul Hafez Mirai Al Kaabneh Sunday received commander of the U.S. Air Force, General Carl Franklin and his accompanying delegation. Field Marshal Kaabneh and Gen. Franklin discussed the situation in the region and bilateral relations in the military field, as well as issues of mutual concern. The U.S. delegation listened to a briefing on the evolution of the Jordanian Armed Forces. The meeting was attended by the assistant chief-of-staff for planning and organisation, chief-of-staff for the Royal Air Force, in addition to the U.S. ambassador to Jordan and the acting U.S. military attaché in Amman.

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Israel and PNA ministers met last week

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AFP) — Palestinian planning and international cooperation minister, Nabil Shaath, and Israeli defence minister, Yitzhak Mordechai, met last week to discuss the stalled peace talks, a Palestinian official said Sunday. No progress was reported in the meeting that was organised within the framework of an Egyptian initiative to get the talks restarted, the official told AFP, asking not to be named. But the Palestinian side sensed a "real concern" from Mr. Mordechai about the deadlock in the peace process that has just entered its fourth month, the source added. Mr. Mordechai's office would not comment on the report of the meeting, whose location was not disclosed. Egyptian mediator Osama Baz is slated to meet separately with Israelis and Palestinians this week in an attempt to mediate a resumption of peace talks.

Palestinians say they were beaten by Israeli soldiers

DAHARIYEH (AFP) — Some 15 Palestinian labourers who tried to avoid an Israeli roadblock on their way to jobs in Israel were caught and beaten by Israeli soldiers on Sunday, Palestinian witnesses said. A few dozen workers were taking their usual, illegal route from the territories to Beer Sheva in southern Israel when Israeli soldiers caught some of them and beat them, said Ahmad Shaheen, 40. "We had crossed the road near the block and the soldiers started chasing us and managed to grab some of us and started beating them," Mr. Shaheen told AFP. "I saw one kicked in the stomach by a soldier." Some 50,000 Palestinians cross into Israel to work each day. The current Palestinian unemployment rate sits at 30 per cent in the Gaza Strip and West Bank and Palestinian officials estimate some 40,000 new workers enter the job market each year.

Cousteau to be buried Thursday in hometown

PARIS (AFP) — French undersea explorer Jacques Yves Cousteau is to be buried in his hometown in southwest France Thursday, his family announced Sunday. Cousteau, who died aged 87 last Wednesday, will be laid to rest in the family vault at Saint-Andre-de-Cubzac, near Bordeaux, where he was born on June 11, 1910. A public memorial service to Cousteau, who became famous around the world for his films and books, will be held at Notre Dame cathedral in Paris Monday. President Jacques Chirac will be among the mourners.

Malaria, meningitis claims 190 lives in Sudan

KHARTOUM (AFP) — Malaria and meningitis have claimed over 190 lives in Sudan this year, the head of the health ministry's epidemiology, Isam Mohamed Gelender, said in an interview published Sunday. Malaria attacked 177,000 people, causing 177 fatalities, while there had been 224 cases of meningitis, 17 of them fatal, Mr. Gelender was quoted as saying by the independent Al Rai Al Akher daily.

Sharansky says Israel to facilitate movement of goods to West Bank

By Tareq Ayyoub
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Israeli Industry and Trade Minister Natan Sharansky said Sunday that Israel will work to remove obstacles that hinder the flow of Jordanian-made products into the Palestinian self-rule areas but said that Israel will make no concessions regarding security measures on the borders.

"We both agreed that our trade relations and economic cooperation has unique potential, those problems sooner or later will be removed and very quickly," said Mr. Sharansky following separate meetings with Deputy Prime Minister for Development Affairs Jawad Anani and Trade and Industry Minister Hani Mulki.

Mr. Sharansky added that "some of these obstacles can be removed in a matter of weeks. We are both devoted to make special efforts in this summer."

Dr. Anani's meeting with Mr. Sharansky came one day after severe criticism made by Dr. Anani over Israel using security pretexts to secure economic gains in its trade with Jordan and the Palestinians.

"I do not know what are the



Minister of Trade and Industry Hani Mulki shakes hands with his Israeli counterpart Natan Sharansky, Sunday. Mr. Sharansky also met with Deputy Prime Minister for Development Affairs Jawad Anani (Photo by Yousef Allan)

grounds for these accusations... maybe from the distance, the security question works like security phobia, but there are cases such as the explosion in the centre of Jerusalem and Tel Aviv where dozens of people were killed... that is something that you have to take very seriously into account," the Israeli minister said.

Mr. Sharansky also said

that he discussed ideas to facilitate the transportation of Jordanian cement to the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) saying that these ideas would be adopted very quickly.

"We are going to look at the problem of bridges, the problem of standards and to look into other barriers which still exist, to remove them," the former Russian dissident

(Continued on page 7)

Levy cancels meeting with premier; new cabinet maybe delayed more over Sharon

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's naming of his new cabinet could be further delayed because of a new row with his foreign minister over a role in peace talks for hardliner Ariel Sharon, officials said Sunday.

"We're still waiting to hear if the cabinet will be presented tomorrow," the chairman of the government coalition, Michael Eitan, told Israel Radio.

Foreign Minister David Levy cancelled a meeting with Mr. Netanyahu Sunday after learning of a secret meeting with the Palestinians

of which he was not informed, officials said.

A crisis between Mr. Levy and Mr. Netanyahu appeared to be smoothed over last week when the two met twice and agreed the foreign minister would have more of a say in peace talks with the Palestinians.

As a moderate in the right-wing government, Mr. Levy had objected to hardline National Infrastructure Minister Ariel Sharon's demand that he be included in the peace talks team in exchange for accepting the finance portfolio. But news Friday that Mr. Sharon met secretly in

mid-June with Palestinian National Authority (PNA) second-in-command Mahmoud Abbas without Mr. Levy's knowledge further upset the foreign minister.

Mr. Levy was not angered by the meeting itself but that Mr. Netanyahu did not inform him of it, the Yediot Aharanot newspaper reported.

Aides close to Mr. Levy said he would not resign over the matter but was not prepared to meet with the prime minister before Mr. Netanyahu presents his new cabinet to parliament, the Knesset, Monday.

Despite the tensions, Mr.

Levy was not expected to order his four Gesher members in the Knesset to vote against the new lineup.

Ardent rightwinger Mr. Sharon is slated to be named finance minister after his predecessor, Dan Meridor, was pushed out by Mr. Netanyahu last week.

Moshe Katsav will be named as national infrastructure and deputy prime minister, Silvan Shalom as tourism minister and Michael Eitan as science minister and cabinet coordinator, Yediot reported.

Netanyahu condemns anti-Islam posters hung by Hebron settlers

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AFP) — Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Sunday condemned posters plastered on the walls of Arab shops in the West Bank town of Hebron defaming Prophet Mohammad and Islam.

The premier telephoned the Palestinian mayor of Hebron, Mustafa Natshe, to "vigorously condemn these anti-Islamic posters," said a statement released by Mr. Netanyahu's office.

"The prime minister considers the distribution of these posters with the utmost gravity, (as they) go against the respect that we have for Islam, for the Prophet Mohammad and other religions," said the statement.

Mr. Natshe told AFP he was pleased that Mr. Netanyahu had spoken to him over the incident.

"I asked him to order Israeli soldiers to treat such incidents, which provoke tension in Hebron, with severity," he added.

The posters were found early Saturday around 20 shops near Jewish enclaves in Hebron's Old City, sparking violent clashes between Palestinian youths and Israeli soldiers.

The Islamist group Hamas denounced the posters



Tatiana Susnik, 25, an extreme right-wing Israeli woman from Jerusalem is being brought to an Israeli court Sunday, after she was suspected of hanging anti Islam posters (AFP photo)

defaming the Prophet Mohammad. "This is an intentional crime that our people will not forget and proves it is impossible to live with Jews," Hamas said in a statement.

Arab ministers call for unified media campaign

CAIRO (AFP) — Arab information ministers called Sunday for a media campaign against the United States for a Congress vote recognising Jerusalem as Israel's united capital.

The ministers, ending a two-day meeting in Cairo, called on the Arab media to highlight the "dangers" of the non-binding resolution passed on June 10 which it said would encourage Israel to steal more Arab land.

"The American resolution is a racist decision aimed at 'Judaizing' the Holy City," the ministers and representatives from 22 Arab countries said in their final statement.

The non-binding resolution "leaves the way open for the Israeli government to steal more Palestinian land" and "encourages Israel in its intransigence and defiance of international resolutions," it said.

The information ministers agreed to compile a book of eyewitness accounts of Israeli practices, and to hold a conference on Israeli human rights violations in Brussels on August 28.

Central Bank eliminates all controls on foreign exchange

By Samir Ghawi
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Against the background of healthy foreign exchange reserves, high inflows of foreign currencies, sound monetary and financial stability and successful implementation of reforms, the Central Bank of Jordan (CBJ) Sunday took the decision to fully liberalise foreign exchange dealings in Jordan.

According to a statement issued by the CBJ, there are absolutely no restrictions whatsoever on bringing into the Kingdom or taking out any amount of Jordanian or foreign currencies and gold. Payments for goods or possible services as well as capital payments can be conducted without restriction, CBJ Governor Ziyad Fariz stressed to the Jordan Times.

The liberalisation decision allows any resident to hold unlimited foreign currency deposits and to withdraw or transfer any sum from the accounts without any controls, just like non-residents.

Banks can finance the

costs of goods imported for the free zones or in transit and extend credit facilities to clients to finance these goods, Dr. Fariz indicated.

"By issuing these new regulations, the inflow and outflow of capital now enjoys full liberalisation just as those current payments for goods and other invisible payments," the CBJ statement concluded.

Asked what will be the main effect of this decision, the governor said he expects larger inflows of foreign exchange to the Kingdom as a result of the full liberalisation move.

Taking this question to a number of bankers, the Jordan Times recorded the following responses:

Export and Finance General Adnan Sallakh described the decision as more of a formal authorisation for banks to deal freely in foreign exchange. "In daily business transactions there has not been any control that can be mentioned, so the decision is more or less a formality," he said.

He said the CBJ statement is an assurance for Jordanians who hold large deposits overseas to repatri-

ate their money as it can be moved out freely again at any time.

Furthermore, Mr. Sallakh pointed out, Jordanians are now able to seize investment chances outside just as freely as foreign investors can make profitable investment in the Kingdom.

Asked if the move carries any negative effects, the general manager replied: "To the contrary... had the CBJ not seen the positive effects and advantages over a period of time of observation, the Central Bank would not have gone to the full liberalisation decision of today."

Hani Qadi, general manager of the Arab Jordan Investment Bank, described the CBJ action as "very, very positive" and said that it would encourage people to invest and allow inflows of hard currencies. He said that the decision will boost foreign reserves and noted that had the financial and monetary situation not been so good, the CBJ would not have resorted to this move.

(Continued on page 7)

Jordan rejects Israeli security request at joint Aqaba airport

AMMAN (AP) — Jordan has rejected an Israeli proposal that Israel handle security at an expanded airport that would serve Israeli and Jordanian cities on the Gulf of Aqaba.

Israel had suggested that its officers supervise checks of passengers' travel documents and luggage headed for Eilat, the Israeli city which the airport would serve, said Captain Jassir Ziad, head of the Civil Aviation Authority.

Mr. Ziad said Sunday that the proposal was rejected as an infringement of Jordan's sovereignty.

"Jordan can provide the security requirements," he said.

Jordan and Israel are discussing the possibility of expanding runways and facilities at Aqaba International Airport to serve both Aqaba and Eilat, which is just across the border.

In May, the government

announced that it would allow international flights bound for Eilat landing rights at Aqaba this summer to examine the technical feasibility of a joint airport. But officials warned the disagreement could halt the plans.

Shalom Tourgeman, a spokesman for the Israeli embassy, acknowledged differences, but declined to provide details.

Ciller loses 2 more deputies, Yilmaz very close to power

ANKARA (R) — Turkey's pro-Western foreign minister, Tansu Ciller, lost more blood on Sunday in a political shake-up that threatens to leave her on the sidelines after she used the "Islamist card" in a gamble for power.

Two more deputies from the conservative True Path Party resigned in anger at their leader Ms. Ciller's attempts to defy the influential army and become prime minister again as head of a pro-Islamist coalition.

The MPs were expected to defect to Mesut Yilmaz, who is close to setting up a secularist government and thus winning a major battle in the war with Ms. Ciller for leadership of the Turkish right.

"We haven't been able to secure stability in parliament. That is why I have made this move, aimed at uniting the right," Anatolian news agency quoted resigning MP Evren Bulut as saying on Saturday night.

Mr. Yilmaz is expected to present President Suleyman Demirel with a cabinet list of a secularist government by Tuesday at the latest and go on to win a parliamentary confidence vote within 10 days.

Ms. Ciller would be in opposition for the first time since she became Turkey's first woman prime minister at a party congress in 1993, less than two years after leaving a successful career as an economist to try her hand at poli-

tics. U.S.-educated Ms. Ciller, once the darling of the financial markets and Turkey's Western allies, has fallen from grace with the secularist establishment during a year in coalition with the Islamist-based Welfare Party of Necmettin Erbakan.

Opponents accuse Ms. Ciller, previously a strong critic of the Islamists, of only joining Mr. Erbakan to deflect corruption charges he had brought against her.

"She has not been trusted at home or abroad since that," said a Western diplomat. "There is little sympathy for her now that she's in trouble," he said.

Ms. Ciller was to swap jobs with Mr. Erbakan and head a government that would take Turkey to early elections. But the president spoiled the show by asking Mr. Yilmaz, not Ms. Ciller, to find the next government. Mr. Yilmaz has urged early elections next spring.

The Islamists are reckoned to have enough support to come back strongly at the polls. But some commentators say True Path could struggle to win the 10 per cent of the vote needed to enter parliament.

It would be premature to write off Ms. Ciller, a clever operator who has outlived many political adversaries.

The Turkish press said on Sunday that Ms. Ciller, a member of a caretaker cabi-

net, may ditch her Islamist allies in a late effort to join the Yilmaz camp and save her crumbling party.

"We would be open to that idea," Mehmet Salih Yildirim, a senior member of Mr. Yilmaz's Motherland Party, said in comments reported by Anatolian.

But many other members of the secularist alliance would be happy to see Ms. Ciller forced onto the opposition benches where the graft charges, mostly related to privatisation, would probably be resurrected.

Critics, including Mr. Yilmaz, have dubbed Ms. Ciller's wealthy friends and relatives the "waterside gang" after her family's luxury mansion on the banks of Istanbul's Bosphorus strait. She has other property in Turkey and the United States.

"Morality will not dominate Turkish politics until she gives an account of her wealth. The Turkish judiciary will call on her," Husamettin Cindoruk, the leader of one of the secularist coalition parties, said on Saturday.

The Turkish press, once taken by the novelty of Ms. Ciller and government financial aid she gave to newspapers, has turned on her with a vengeance in recent days.

Papers have reported that Ms. Ciller has taken to food binges and smashing plates in her home under the recent strain.

Iraqi government announces increase in monthly allotments

BAGHDAD (Agencies) — The Iraqi government announced Sunday that it would increase most monthly rations to its people, who are still suffering widespread shortages despite the U.N. oil-for-food deal.

The increase comes just a month after Iraq cut in half the ration for rice and declared it was unable to increase other allotments because Washington had blocked contracts under the deal.

The trade ministry, which is responsible for the distribution, did not give a reason for the increase, but the United Nations has required bigger allotments as part of the agreement that allowed Iraq to resume its limited oil exports in December.

In July, Iraqis will receive 2 kilograms of sugar, up from 0.5 kilograms, said the statement, which was carried by the official Iraqi News Agency.

Allotments of tea will increase from 100 grammes to 150 grammes, soap from 150 grammes to 250 grammes and detergent from 250 grammes to 350 grammes, the statement said.

As part of the increase, babies will receive 2.7 kilograms of powdered milk, up from 1.8 kilograms, it said.

New items were added to the ration card, including 0.5 kilograms of pulses and 150 grammes of salt.

A key ration is rice. In July, Iraqis will receive 2 kilograms, up from 1.25 kilograms in June. But that is still less than the 2.5 kilograms the month before.

Rations of flour will not change.

Iraqis pay for the monthly rations, but the cost is far



An Iraqi man and his children, who are employed in the Saddam Children Hospital in Baghdad unload medical supplies which were shipped from Japan on Sunday (Reuters photo)

below the market price. For example, a kilogramme of flour costs less than a cent under the ration programme but sells for 40 cents on the open market, a hefty price in Iraq's ravaged economy.

The ration system was introduced soon after the United Nations imposed sweeping sanctions on Iraq for its 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

Japan sends medical aid

In a related development, a Japanese humanitarian organisation has donated 25 tonnes of medical supplies for Iraqi hospitals and distribution started here Sun-

day, its President Itsuko Hirata said.

A Japanese shipping line transported the aid, worth \$700,000, free of charge to the Aqaba Port from where it was sent to sanctions-hit Iraq.

Mr. Hirata is to travel to Mosul in northern Iraq Monday and then on to Basra in the south to carry out the distribution.

Census held in five provinces

Meanwhile, an Iraqi newspaper reported Sunday that five Iraqi governorates have held a census that will be followed by a nation-

wide one in October, the first to be conducted since 1987.

"Iraq on Friday held an experimental census in five Iraqi provinces including the capital Baghdad," the English daily the Baghdad Observer reported on Sunday.

It gave no population figures of the five governorates but said the census also counted houses, installations, farm equipment and crops and surveyed the social status of people and the distribution of the workforce.

The paper said October's census would "have a special significance in drawing

up future plans to achieve economic growth" in Iraq, hit by the stringent U.N. sanctions.

Newspapers said the government had banned families and civil servants from moving from one province to another until the census was over.

The census will be carried out in 18 Iraqi governorates except the three northern provinces, outside the control of the central government since 1991.

Quoting a United Nations report, the Baghdad Observer said Iraq would have a population of 20.4 million by the year 2000 and 46.2 by the year 2025.

PFLP denounces Sharon-Abbas meeting

DAMASCUS (AFP) — The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) of George Habash on Sunday condemned a meeting between former Israeli general Ariel Sharon and a leading Palestinian official.

Maher Taber, spokesman for the Damascus-based PFLP, said in a statement the PFLP "strongly denounces the meeting with the criminal Sharon, who carried out the Sabra and Shatila massacres and has Palestinian blood on his hands."

An Israeli inquiry found then-Defence Minister Sharon

"indirectly" responsible for the 1982 massacre of Palestinians in the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps in Beirut.

Mr. Sharon, the national infrastructure minister whose "hawkish" views towards the Palestinians are well-known, met secretly on June 16 with Mahmud Abbas, the number two in the Palestinian National Authority (PNA), according to Israeli television.

It was the first meeting between a senior Palestinian official and the 69-year-old Mr. Sharon, who just two weeks ago described Palestinian President Yasser Arafat as

a "war criminal."

In his statement, Mr. Taber said: "We wonder what the (PNA) expects to obtain from Mr. Sharon except for more 'Judaisation' and colonisation of Palestinian land."

The PFLP opposes Mr. Arafat's autonomy agreements with Israel.

Israeli-Palestinian peace talks have been suspended since Israel began building a settlement for 30,000 Jews in Arab east Jerusalem in mid-March.

Iraqi parliament speaker visits Russia

BAGHDAD (AFP) — Iraqi Parliament Speaker Saadoun Hammadi left for Moscow on Sunday to brief Russian leaders on Iraq's troubled relations with the United Nations, the official news agency INA said.

Mr. Hammadi will also discuss the delays in implementation of the U.N. oil-for-food accord.

The U.N. Security Council, including Russia, warned on June 21 of unspecified new sanctions against Baghdad unless it grants full access to U.N. inspectors eliminating Iraq's weapons of mass destruction.

On the oil-for-food front, Iraq accuses the United States of delaying food and medical imports under the humanitarian exemption to the U.N. sanctions in force since 1990.

The crippling sanctions were imposed after Iraq's August 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Saudi, Egyptian FM's to meet

CAIRO (AFP) — The foreign ministers of Saudi Arabia and Egypt are to meet here Thursday to discuss the crisis in the Middle East peace process and other issues, foreign ministry officials said Sunday. An official said Prince Saud Al Faisal, the Saudi foreign minister, and his Egyptian counterpart Amr Musa will discuss "the situation in the Middle East and the Gulf, obstacles to the peace process and the efforts being made to save it." The Saudi-Egyptian committee which they head will also discuss the question of Egyptian workers in Saudi Arabia and "how to guarantee the rights of both sides," the official said. Nearly one million Egyptians work in Saudi Arabia. Many of them complain about working conditions and restrictions imposed upon them such as the system of "guarantees" which requires them to have a Saudi sponsor to whom they hand over part of their salary. Mr. Musa and Prince Faisal will also discuss bilateral cooperation, particularly how to boost economic ties.

Football match degenerates into death

ALEXANDRIA (AFP) — A brawl during a children's football match sparked a clash between two families that left a seven-year-old boy dead, 20 cows burned alive and nearly \$20,000 of damage, Wael and Nasser, both aged seven, started fighting during a friendly match in the streets of a village near the Mediterranean city of Alexandria, said the Al Jumhuriyah government daily. The following day members of young Nasser's family stormed into the house of Wael Mohammed Ali and killed the youngster to avenge their child's honour, said the paper. Ali's family retaliated by attacking Nasser's family with firearms and clubs, injuring several people. They also burned down three buildings belonging to the rival family, killing 20 prize cows and causing \$17,600 of damage, said the paper. Police have launched a manhunt for several members of both families who have gone into hiding.

Israeli army responds to Palestinian fire

RAMALLAH (AFP) — Seven fire trucks from the Israeli army responded Sunday to a large fire at a Palestinian mattress factory in the West Bank town of Ramallah, witnesses said. The Palestinians requested the Israeli aid when their fire fighters were unable to control the blaze, said Saeb Nassar, an official with the Ramallah self-rule authority. No injuries were reported but damage was estimated at millions of dollars from the fire that quickly spread from the Smoorn mattress factory to a textile factory next door in the Ramallah industrial zone. The Israeli fire trucks, which helped put out the blaze, responded from Jerusalem.

\$7 million worth of drugs seized

DUBAI (AP) — Authorities broke a five-man drug ring and seized more than 51 kilograms of hallucinogens, the Khaleej Times reported Sunday. Three nationals from an unnamed Gulf country, an Iranian and a Syrian were arrested after police found the tablets hidden in furniture shipped to Dubai from Turkey in March, the paper said. It did not say when the arrests took place. The pills were worth 27 million dirhams, the English-language paper said. The Emirates can impose the death penalty on convicted drug traffickers and dealers.

Elections held for 3 new Lebanese MPs

BEIRUT (AFP) — Elections were held Sunday in Lebanon for three parliamentary seats where voting irregularities were ruled to have occurred during last year's legislative polls.

The interior ministry said 54 per cent of the 64,000 electors turned out in the Jbail region north of Beirut to elect a Maronite Christian deputy.

The figure was two per cent higher than the turnout during the polls in August and September last year, said an election official.

However, only around 18 per cent of the 600,000 electors in the northern Lebanon region turned out Sunday to elect a Maronite deputy and a Sunni Muslim deputy, said the ministry.

The turnout in the region during last year's polls was

put at 40 per cent.

Police said voting passed off in both regions in a relatively quiet manner, with only the odd scuffle reported at a few polling booths.

Lebanon's constitutional court ordered new elections for the three seats after ruling that some candidates had been elected through counting errors and that unfair pressure had been put on voters in some areas.

There are 128 seats in the Lebanese parliament, divided along confessional lines. Critics say the system is weighted towards pro-Syrian candidates.

Syria is the main power broker in Lebanon, where it stations 35,000 troops and security agents.

The interior ministry said the results of the polls were expected on Monday.

Iran not seeking nuclear weapons, wants Gulf defence pacts, senior general says

TEHRAN (AFP) — Iran is not trying to acquire nuclear or chemical weapons, and is ready to sign defence pacts with Gulf neighbours to prove it has no expansionist aims in the region, a senior Iranian general said Sunday.

"We are seeking to expand our defence capability, but we have no desire to acquire banned weapons such as nuclear bombs and chemical weapons," said General Mohsen Rezaei, head of Iran's Revolutionary Guards.

Mr. Rezaei told the Keyhan International newspaper that Iran is already producing most of the weapons that it needed, including sophisticated

anti-tank rockets and short- and medium-range missiles.

"Iran has no expansionist desires and we want peaceful coexistence with our neighbours ... Now we are ready to sign security and defence pacts with our Arab neighbours in the Persian Gulf," he added.

In recent months both the United States and Israel have warned that Iran is building up its military arsenal with long-range missiles and weapons of mass destruction.

Last week General Binford Peay, the commander of the 22,000 U.S. troops stationed in the Gulf, said Iran could acquire nuclear weapons by the year 2000. Mr. Rezaei called on all

U.S. forces to leave the region, and warned that Iran would defend itself vigorously if attacked.

"Let me send a clear message to the Americans: the Persian Gulf is our region. They have to leave our region. We have vital interests in the Persian Gulf and we are going to defend our interests."

"Iran will never start a war. But if Americans one day decide to attack us ... we will turn the region into a slaughterhouse for them," he said.

Mr. Rezaei again repeated the official Iranian line that the country had no role in the bombing of a U.S. military establishment in eastern Saudi Arabia last year in which 19 U.S. service-

men died.

Iran begins Gulf drills

Meanwhile, the official IRNA news agency, Iranian Revolutionary Guards, known as Pasdaran, and regular army forces began four days of exercises in the Gulf on Sunday.

The agency said the manoeuvres were aimed at "raising the level of combat capability of the forces taking part."

The Iranian military holds around 40 exercises a year in the Gulf and the Sea of Oman.

The United States has deployed around 22,000 troops in the Gulf region since the end of the 1991 Gulf war.

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel. 773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO

3:30 Holy Koran
3:40 Spirou
4:05 Neighbours
4:30 Doc. — In The Wild
5:00 Tilt
5:30 Blue Heelers
6:10 French Programmes
7:00 News in French
7:30 News Headline
7:35 Comedy. — Murphy Brown
8:00 Discover Magazine
8:30 Murder She Wrote
9:10 Highlander
10:00 News in English
10:35 The Wright Verdict
11:00 Homieside

PRAYER TIMES

03:53 Fajr
05:28 (Sunrise) Duha
12:39 Dhuhur
16:19 'Asr
19:50 Maghreb
21:25 'Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church
Sweifeh, Tel. 810740

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

Assemblies of God Church Tel. 632785.
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440.
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757.
Terra Sancta Church Tel. 622366
Anglican Church Tel. 652826.
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331.
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261.
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751.
Amman International Church Tel. 5516245
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 824328.
German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 845457
The Latter-Day Saints Tel. 654932.
Church of Nazarene Tel. 675691.
The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295
English-speaking
Latin Catholics Parish Tel. 614190.

ment of Meteorology
A slight rise in temperatures will take place and temperatures will be 3-4 degrees above seasonal average. In Aqaba, it will be hot and winds northerly moderate. Seas will be calm.

Min/Max. temp.
Amman 19/33
Aqaba 25/40
Deserts 17/36
Jordan Valley 22/39
Yesterday's high temperatures:
Amman 31, Aqaba 39 Humidity readings: Amman 34 per cent, Aqaba 27 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:
Dr. Abbas Al Haidin 885446
Dr. Arafat Ashubab 602507
Dr. Ayman Al Muhtaseb 875748
Dr. Jamal Jharah 847351
Firas pharmacy 661912
Ferdows pharmacy 778336
Al Asema pharmacy 637055

Nairoukh pharmacy 623672
Al Salam pharmacy 636730
Yacoub pharmacy 649455
Shmeisani pharmacy 637660
Najib pharmacy 847632

IRBID:
Dr. Ahmad Qanu 281484
Al Quds pharmacy (—)
ZARQA:
Dr. Ya'coub Al Khatib 991772
Khalifeh pharmacy 985417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 637111
Civil Defence Department 661111
Civil Defence Immediate Rescue 630341
Civil Defence Emergency 199
Rescue Police 192, 621111, 637777
Fire Brigade 617101
Blood Bank 775121
Highway Police 843402
Traffic Police 896390
Public Security Dept. 630321
Hotel Complaints 605800
Price Complaints 661176
Water & Sewerage Complaints 891467

Amman Municipality Complaints 787111
Telephone Information (directory assistance) 121
Overseas Calls 010230
Central Amman Telephone Repairs 623101
Abdali Tel. Repairs 661101
Jordan Television 773111
Radio Jordan 774111
Water Authority 680101
J. Electricity Authority 815615
Electric Power Co. 636381
RJ Flight Information 08-53200
Queen Alia Intl. Airport 08-53200

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
Hussein Medical Centre 81381332
Khalidi Maternity 644281/6
Aklieh Maternity 642441/2
Jabal Amman Maternity 642362
Malhas, J. Amman 636140
Palestine, Shmeisani 607071
Shmeisani Hospital 669131
University Hospital 845845
Al-Muasher Hospital 667227/9
The Islamic, Abdali 666126/37
Al-Ahli, Abdali 664164/6
Italian, Al-Muhajreen 777101/3

Al-Bashir 775111/26
Army, Marka 891611/15
Queen Alia Hospital 602240/50
Amal Hospital 674155
The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery 865199

ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital (09)983323
Zarqa National Hospital (09)900560
Ibn Sina Hospital (09)986732
Al Hikma Modern Hospital (09)990990

IRBID:
Princess Basma Hospital (02)275555
Greek Catholic Hospital (02)272275
Ibn Al Nafees Hospital (02)247100

AQABA:
Princess Haya Hospital (03)314111
FOR THE TRAVELLER
QUEEN ALIA
INTERNATIONAL
AIRPORT
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Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (08)53200-5, where it should always be verified. Information on other flights can be supplied on phone 08 (52700).

ARRIVALS
Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
08:05 Damascus (RJ)
08:05 Sanaa (RJ)
09:30 Jeddah (RJ)
09:45 New Delhi (RJ)
10:20 Dubai, Abu Dhabi (RJ)
10:25 Beirut (RJ)
17:10 Riyadh (RJ)
17:15 Cairo (RJ)
17:30 London (RJ)
17:40 New York, Amsterdam (RJ)

Other Flights
10:45 Bangkok, Doha (RJ)
23:20 Casablanca (RJ)
04:10 Jakarta, Kuala Lumpur (RJ)

DEPARTURES
Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
06:45 Beirut (RJ)
08:45 Casablanca (RJ)
12:20 Amsterdam, Chicago (RJ)
13:00 Amsterdam, Frankfurt (RJ)
13:15 Cairo (RJ)
13:25 London (RJ)
21:45 Bahrain, Doha (RJ)
22:05 Dubai, Muscat (RJ)
22:25 Al 'Ain, Abu Dhabi (RJ)
23:45 Sanaa (RJ)
00:01 Damascus (RJ)
03:40 Doha (RJ)
04:30 Dhahran (RJ)

Other Flights
06:15 Istanbul (TK)
08:45 Beirut (ME)
09:10 London (BA)
12:00 Khartoum (SD)
15:00 Bahrain (GF)
15:50 Vienna (OS)
21:10 Tel Aviv (LY)
23:15 Cairo (MS)
23:55 Damascus, Paris (AF)
02:30 Amsterdam (KL)
04:00 Athens (OA)

Prince inaugurates Special Services Centre for the Blind

AMMAN (Petra) — HRH Prince Ra'd Ben Zeid Sunday inaugurated a Special Services Centre for the Blind at the University of Jordan.

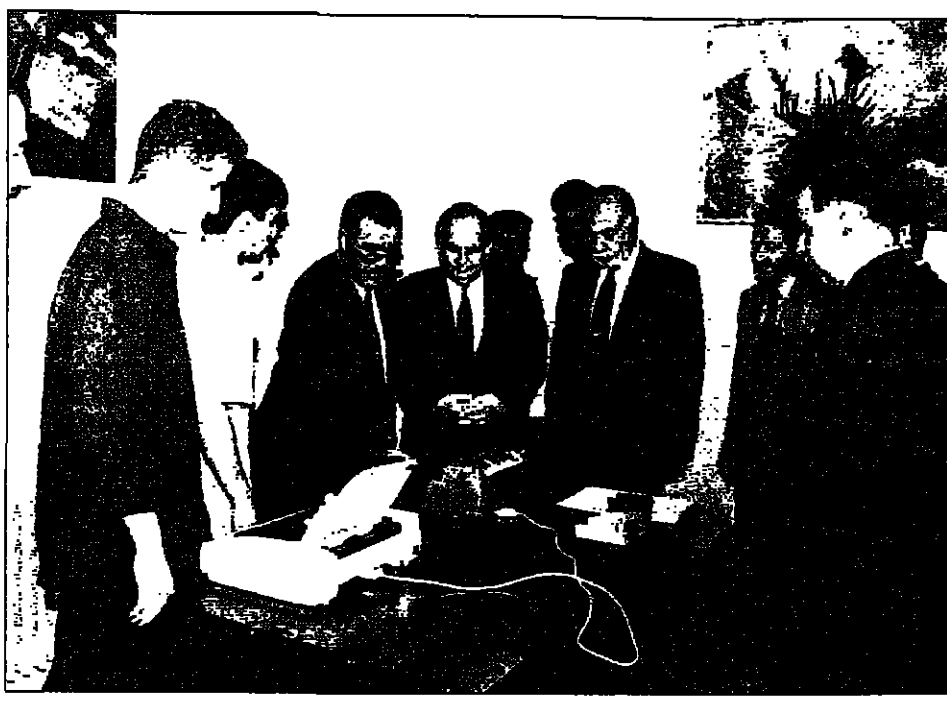
He expressed appreciation to the Industrial Development Bank (IDB) which provided new equipment for the centre.

At the opening ceremony, Prince Ra'd stated that the centre would guide blind students in their university courses and serve as a nucleus for a library for the blind.

New aid proffered for the centre consists of equipment in Braille, connected to a typewriter to enable sight-impaired students to type a text either in Arabic or English which the sighted read as ordinary print, according to Prince Ra'd.

Ten such machines have been bought through IDB funding and will be distributed to institutions which cater to the blind in order that those who use them might achieve self-reliance, he added.

Prince Ra'd, who has a history of working to promote self-reliance among the disabled, announced that in compliance with directives from His



HRH Prince Ra'd Ben Zeid inspects new equipment in Braille, connected to a typewriter which enables sight-impaired students to type text either in Arabic or English which the sighted read as ordinary print (Petra photo)

Majesty King Hussein, a special escalator will be installed at the entrance of the Royal Court for the benefit of the disabled who have been, heretofore, physically carried into the building.

In the next few weeks, he said, a similar lift will be installed at Parliament and

the Ministry of Public Works and Housing is undertaking the project at the cost of JD 60,000.

Furthermore, the Prince explained that work is now underway for the installation of special equipment at the traffic lights to signal to the blind whether these are green or red

lights.

Dean of the Department of Student Affairs Dr. Salman Bedour, announced that 27 students will now benefit from the new centre.

University President Fawzi Gharaibeh and other officials were present at the ceremony.

Psychiatrists testify in Dakamseh case

By Rana Hussein
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The trial of Corporal Ahmad Dakamseh, the Jordanian soldier accused of killing seven Israeli schoolgirls in March, Sunday shifted significantly when psychiatrists testified that the defendant might have not been aware of his actions when he shot the students.

The psychiatrists, testifying for the defence, did not examine the defendant but said that individuals with a personality disorder, such as the one they feel Cpl. Dakamseh suffers, are unable to plan their actions but rather act impulsively without taking consequences into consideration.

They further added that when provoked, these persons are possessed of instantaneous reactions and that "their hands act before their minds."

Two psychiatric experts, appointed by the court to examine the defendant, following a prosecution witness' testimony that Cpl. Dakamseh suffered a personality disorder, last week affirmed that the suspect was, indeed, possessed of an anti-social mental neurosis.

"In the moment of the action, these individuals do not distinguish right from wrong," Mohammad Hazyimeh, 37, a former doctor at Aidon Military Hospital, where the defendant had undergone treatment, said.

Dr. Hazyimeh, who has examined Cpl. Dakamseh twice in the past six years, testified that in 1994 he completed a medical report which affirmed that the defendant suffered from a personality disorder.

When asked by the court the reasons for which he failed to recommend that Cpl. Dakamseh be relieved of military duty based on his professional diagnosis, Dr. Hazyimeh maintained that this was not his prerogative.

"My duty is to issue the defendant a 48-hour sick leave and send a report to his superiors and it is they who must determine whether he is fit for military duty or not," he said.

Psychiatrist Lutfi Khasawneh, 60, cited as an example that a person suffering from an anti-social personality disorder might violently react to a slight without grasping the import of his actions.

"After [such] a person is provoked, he or she does not measure his or her actions," Dr. Khasawneh stated.

He added that such persons might also suffer from a functional loss of

consciousness and neither recognise time nor place.

Dr. Khasawneh, a practising mental health specialist for the past 17 years, described an anti-social personality disorder as comprising symptoms such as extreme behaviour, loss of consciousness and inability to measure actions in accordance with accepted societal norms.

"Any person who suffers from a loss of conscious or confusion after [perceived] provocation is unable to react in a normal or reasonable manner," Dr. Khasawneh said.

He explained that the patient in question enters a state of unconsciousness and loses contact with the outside world and in some cases evidences a loss of control over his/her body, acting in a "random" manner.

Psychologist Ahmad Khalaf, 63, also took the witness stand, confirming the previous theories.

"It is possible that Cpl. Dakamseh shot the girls in a stage of confusion, resulting from provocation," he said. "It is also possible that he acted while in this bewildered stage as the shooting [could be considered] a symptom of his personality and instinctual."

However, Dr. Khalaf described the period allotted for psychiatric examination of the defendant as insufficient.

"The observation period should be effected 24 hours a day and last from four to six weeks but, as I understood from the report, the specialists examined the defendant only four times," Dr. Khalaf asserted. "This is not enough to accurately determine his mental condition."

He did affirm that, based on psychiatric reports and the circumstances of the case, the defendant's action would seem to confirm that he suffers either from acute psychosis, hysteria or a state of exaggerated sensitivity to provocation.

Dr. Khalaf confirmed the possibility that the defendant might have been administered a medical substance which would either cause him to be swayed by those doctors interviewing him or say things he would not ordinarily say.

In his testimony, Cpl. Dakamseh, 26, who pleaded not guilty, alleged that he shot the schoolgirls on March 13 in the Baqoura area upon provocation, claiming that the girls made sarcastic gestures and laughed at him as he performed his prayers.

The prosecution, however, is charging that the defendant plotted to kill

the Israeli students and that he had previously considered killing Israelis who had visited the Baqoura area.

The military court last week ruled to admit videotapes into evidence in which the defendant apparently admitted to various forms of sexual experimentation.

The psychiatrists termed unethical the possible airing of the psychiatric evaluation videotapes of the defendant. Usually videotaping patients is done for medical purposes, they added, however they could be publicly aired with the patient's approval.

Previously Defence Atty. Mjalli contested the presence of the two psychiatric expert witnesses who examined the defendant upon a court directive and determined, in their June 25 testimony, that Cpl. Dakamseh suffered from an anti-social personality disorder.

"These two witnesses are [aiding the] prosecution by handing slips of paper to the prosecutors with questions they should pose," Atty. Mjalli complained.

According to the defence, the court is not expected to introduce the videotapes "based on the psychiatric testimonies [which described the projected move as] unethical."

Also during the session, the court heard the testimony of Major Hassan Bani Milhem of the Criminal Laboratory who testified that he detected traces of tranquillisers in the defendant's body two days after the incident.

Cpl. Dakamseh had told the court that his confessions of plotting to kill Israelis, detailed in the charge sheet, could have been accurate but that he felt that he was under the influence of sleeping pills at the time.

Before resting his case in Sunday's five-hour court session, Defence Atty. Mjalli asked the court to include copies of local dailies in the case file which included a report of clashes which erupted in Hebron after posters tarnishing the image of the Prophet Mohammad were found glued to Arab shops.

"These Israeli practices show recklessness towards the Arab Nation and Islam, and prove that Zionism and Israel aim to wipe out the Arab Nation and its holy cities," Atty. Mjalli said.

At the end of the court session, the court tribunal asked the military prosecution to present its closing argument in the case and set July 5 for that purpose.

Executive tourism programme renewed

AMMAN (Petra) — During Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali's visit to Tunisia, which ended Saturday, the two countries renewed an executive tourism programme for the period of 1997-1999, according to Minister of Tourism and Antiquities Akel Biltaji Sunday.

He described the executive programme as calling for joint marketing the two countries in the Far East, Japan and the Americas through the national airlines of both countries.

The programme also provides for bilateral participation in international tourist exhibitions to be developed in a complementary manner rather than a competitive one, according to the minister.

The programme stipulates an exchange of expertise concerning hotel classification, quality control of traditional crafts and industries, and the convening of tourist exhibitions in Tunisia and Jordan, Mr. Biltaji explained.

The two sides will also organise tourism-awareness campaigns to highlight the attractions of the other's country and develop hotel training colleges, he added.

They will also decree Aqaba and the Tunisian city of Hammamet as 'twin cities' as well as Jerash and Carthage and will provide incentives to the private sector to implement other tourism activities, according to the minister.

Mr. Biltaji accompanied Dr. Majali on the official visit to Tunisia and described the two sides as allocating prominence to questions related to tourism.

Several meetings were held to focus on the training of cadres for employment in tourist-related fields such as hotel management as well as joint marketing the two countries on both regional and international levels.

The two sides resolved to commence preparations for the Jordanian-Tunisian Higher Joint Committee meeting scheduled to take place in Tunis next year.

Peace Corps volunteers gear up for nature work

By Tanya Habjouqa
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The first Peace Corps mission in Jordan is focusing on community and environmental development, working with three prominent non-governmental organisations (NGOs) within the Kingdom. Peace Corps Country Director Larry Bartlett stated.

Three volunteers have been selected to merge their skills with the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature (RSCN) over the next two years, Mr. Bartlett stated.

The volunteers will be treated as regular RSCN staff, with the exception of receiving a salary, RSCN Director General Khaled Irani said Sunday.

"Working together, we hope to broaden staff perspective and establish a mutual flow of ideas, information and contacts," he told the Jordan Times.

The two biologists and zoologist will be stationed in the Shaumari, Mujib, and Dana reserves by the end of July, according to Mr. Irani.

"We hope that the intermingling of different perspectives and culture will build both the language and experience of our staff," he asserted.

While RSCN rangers are experts at their work, a shared expertise could mutually build both skills and understanding for the RSCN staff as well as the Peace Corps volunteers, Mr. Irani explained.

"Our work is pioneering in this region and provides volunteers a chance to apply what they learned in the university," he added.

The volunteers are to conclude a three-day RSCN orientation today and will return to their host families to complete intensive Arabic courses, he added.

The remaining 24 volunteers will work with the Ministry of Social Development, Noor Al Hussein Foundation, and the Queen Alia Fund for Social Development (QAF), Mr. Bartlett said.

The RSCN is a primary example of how the Peace Corps will operate in Jordan, he stated.

"Volunteers' day to day work will be supervised by Jordanian organisations," he explained. "We are responsible for the health and safety of our volunteers."

The 27 volunteers include 20 women and seven men, including four married couples, he said.

"This is due to the fact that we are working largely with women's organisa-

tions and they specifically requested female volunteers," he added.

According to Peace Corps Project Manager Reem Aslan, certain volunteers have already been selected to work with the Ministry of Social Development in a youth rehabilitation centre and in three schools for the deaf.

"We can address community needs through social projects," Ms. Aslan explained.

Volunteers are currently residing with host families in villages surrounding Madaba, learning both Arabic and [being exposed to] Jordanian culture, Mr. Bartlett said.

"Many Jordanian families already consider the volunteers as their adopted children," he said.

He said that Minister of Social Development Mohammed Manser personally thanked the host families for the care they have extended to the volunteers.

"This is not just a language class but a personal social experience," he said. "It teaches Jordanians about Americans on a human level — as opposed to a governmental one — and vice-versa."

When the Jordan Times asked whether the Peace Corps had experienced any cynicism and distrust in regards to their mission from any Jordanians, Mr. Bartlett said that a few had exhibited doubts.

He attributed the mistrust to the name of the agency in that certain Jordanians might connect the Peace Corps with the Middle East peace process.

"But we hope to build a relationship between Jordanians and Americans," he stressed. "When the volunteers return home, we hope they will speak of the hospitality they experienced, and about their adopted families."

Jordan represents the 132nd country where Peace Corps volunteers have served since its establishment in 1961.

The Jordanian government and the Peace Corps signed an agreement in October of last year stipulating its establishment in the Kingdom.

The Peace Corps pledges to provide assistance in education, health and nutrition, agriculture, environment, and small business development in developing countries.

The next group of volunteers will arrive next year, Mr. Bartlett concluded.

The current volunteers will leave for their respective sites after an inaugural ceremony on July 23rd.

Ministry circulates directives for next elections

AMMAN (Petra) — In order to better prepare for the next general elections, the Ministry of Interior Sunday circulated directives to all governors covering new voter registration and the transfer of voter names from one district to another.

Subsequent to a visit by Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali to the Ministry of Interior, the ministry described the new measures as designed to simplify and facilitate the registration process.

Regulations on the transfer of voters names from one district to another are as follows:

- Each district will create a special committee to receive applications for the transfer of voters and will be duly informed of any further developments.

- The application for the district transfer must be submitted by the applicant or a family member registered in his/her family book.

- Applications for the district transfer must be submitted before August 1.

- The applicant must supply proof that he or she



Minister of Interior Nathir Rashid describes new directives to be circulated to all governorates covering voter registration (Petra photo)

is a resident of the constituency for which the application has been submitted.

- A committee will study the application and take the appropriate decision pertaining thereto.

- A sub-committee will collect the applications for the Minister of Interior for an endorsement of the decision.

The regulations for the registration of new voters are as follows:

- Committees comprised of three employees will be created in the various constituencies.

- These committees will register applicant names whose bearer must not be under 19 years as of July 31, as indicated by the information provided in the family book.

- The applicant must submit a copy of the family book attached to the application.

- A special committee will examine the application and implement the necessary procedures.

The prime minister attended the ministry meeting, chaired by Minister of Interior Nathir Rashid and called on the ministry staff and governors in the various districts to facilitate voting registration.

The meeting was attended by senior ministry officials and governors.

Amman prepares for increased urban endeavours

AMMAN (J.T.) — Construction on two tunnels at the Third Circle in Jabal Amman is proceeding according to schedule, and the tunnels are expected to be ready for vehicle traffic on July 10, Amman Mayor Mamdouh Abbadi announced Sunday.

The project is expected to cost JD 1 million and reduce delays at the junction to a maximum of 18 seconds, down from the previous 70 seconds.

The first tunnel will connect the Second Circle with the Fourth, while the second will connect Ras Al Ain Street with the street leading to the Philadelphia Hotel, the mayor affirmed.

A survey conducted by the Greater Amman Municipality (GAM) revealed that nearly 70 per cent of all the city's traffic passes through these points.

According to Dr. Abbadi, the municipality opted to dig tunnels to ease traffic rather than building expensive bridges.

In a statement to the Jordan News Agency, Petra, the mayor discussed work currently in progress to build a tunnel 180 metres in length and 15 metres wide to link the Wadi Haddadeh district with downtown Amman.

Forty metres have already been dug, he stated.

This tunnel, estimated to cost JD 3 to JD 4 million is expected to be completed in November, the mayor said.

A Jordanian and Italian consortium is undertaking the project.

Digging tunnels is an optimal form of construction for Amman as the city is spread over hilly areas, Dr. Abbadi explained.

The tunnel at Wadi Haddadeh is to ease traffic congestion on King Faisal street downtown so that the municipality might create a plaza with fountains in its centre where a number of archaeological and historic sites are located, he stated, citing the Roman Amphitheatre as an example.

The plaza is to be constructed on 140 dunums of land extending 1.4 kilometres in length and 100 metres wide, the mayor maintained.

The municipality has developed designs for cultural, recreational and tourist centres in the heart of the capital, he said.

According to Dr. Abbadi, this area includes the city hall building, inaugurated by His Majesty King Hussein last year, as well as a municipal building, a cultural centre, a museum and a public garden.

WHAT'S GOING ON

FRENCH-ARAB FILM FESTIVAL

* "Machado" at the Royal Cultural Centre at 8:30 p.m.

EXHIBITIONS

* "Silver Jewelry exhibition" will be held at the Jordan Design and Trade Centre of Noor Al Hussein Foundation, until July 20th.

* Karim Rasin's works will be displayed at Orient Gallery, until July 10.

* Works by Namat Al Naser at Instituto Cervantes, Jabal Amman, until June 30.

* Paintings by contemporary Iraqi artists entitled "Ecology and Environment in Iraqi Art" at the Jordan National Gallery of Fine Arts, until July 12 (except Tuesdays).

* Spring Exhibition of Plastic Art '97 at Greater Amman Municipality, Ras Al 'Ain, until June 30.

* "Contemporary Arab Artists Exhibition," shows work of 60 Arab artists, at Darat Al Funun, Jabal Weibdeh, until July 24.

* "Biyoot Min Al Salt," shows works by Mohammad Jalous at Al Tagadam Association-Dabouq, Al Hummar, until June 30.

مكتبة لأمم

Sri Lankan Navy destroys rebel boats off east coast

COLOMBO (R) — The Sri Lankan Navy sank four Tamil Tiger guerrilla boats when it intercepted a rebel flotilla off the east coast of this Indian Ocean island, military officials in the east said Sunday.

They said the navy attacked the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) boats late Saturday near Pulmoddai, north of Trincomalee, which lies some 260 kilometres east of the capital Colombo.

The boats were reportedly carrying reinforcements to the rebel's northern Wanni stronghold, currently under assault by government forces.

Two rebel boats were also damaged in the attack while one escaped, the officials said.

It was not immediately known how many rebels were killed in the battle.

The LTTE's spokesman in London was not immediately available for comment.

The navy sank seven rebel boats last month, when it intercepted another rebel flotilla also believed to be carrying reinforcements. Military officials at the time said up to 50 LTTE rebels were killed in the battle off Kokkilai, 260 kilometres northeast of Colombo.

Meanwhile, a Defence Ministry statement said

Sunday that five rebels were killed in a battle with a military patrol near the northeastern town of Nedunkeni, which was captured last month by troops as part of Operation Jaya Sikuru or Sure of Victory.

The offensive into the rebels' stronghold in the Wanni region began in May.

The Independent Island newspaper said Saturday that the Sri Lankan Army had halted its advance into the northern brush jungles of the Wanni after suffering heavy losses in two counter-attacks by separatists.

It said the army, which has suffered almost 300 troop deaths at the hands of the rebels this month, has temporarily called off the operation aimed at opening a crucial northern highway linking the government-held town of Vavuniya to the Jaffna Peninsula.

Vavuniya is some 220 kilometres north of Colombo while Jaffna is some 100 kilometres further north.

But a Defence Ministry spokesman denied the advance had been halted. "Troops are consolidating. They are dominating ahead of their defences. But the offensive has not been stalled."

"When the time is right for them to move again, they will advance," the spokesman said.

State radio quoted Deputy Defence Minister Anuruddha Ratwatte as saying Sunday that the troops would continue to flush out the rebels in the northern region.

"Terrorists (LTTE) were launching sporadic attacks, but the troops will take control of the highway," Mr. Ratwatte said.

The LTTE, who are fighting for an independent homeland for minority Tamils in Sri Lanka's north and east, attacked the armed forces twice within two weeks, causing heavy losses to both sides.

The government says more than 50,000 people have been killed in the war, now in its 14th year. The LTTE says the toll is higher.

Tamil rebels Sunday accused the "international community" of "unwillingly supporting" the government's military campaign in the north of the country.

The LTTE said security forces were involved in an "intricate programme of expansionism" to take over Tamil regions and convert them into areas of the majority Sinhalese community.

"The Sinhala nation... engaged in an intricate programme of expansionism into Tamil territory, with the unwitting approval of many in the international community," Tigers said in a statement from its London office.

"This is why it is correct to refer to Sri Lanka's war as a 'war on Tamils'," the Tigers said.

The LTTE had said the "international community" seemed to have adjusted to the Sri Lankan government's military strategy that involved "mass rounding up of people."

"The ritual rounding up and interrogation of Tamils in this archaic fashion ought to prompt foreign diplomats and observers to re-consider their patience with Sri Lanka's military strategy."

"Indeed, it is disturbing the extent to which the international community seems to have adjusted to this state of affairs as 'normal' and 'tolerable,'" the LTTE said.

Two weeks earlier, the LTTE accused the United Nations High Commission for Refugees of failing to help civilians displaced by a military operation in the northwest of the country where troops wrested control of a road earlier held by the Tigers.

The Tiger rebels have accused the government of indiscriminate attacks against civilians and say the ban on journalists travelling to rebel-held areas has been successful in preventing reports about the plight of civilians.

Treasury reportedly calls on British government to axe Eurofighter

LONDON (AFP) — The Treasury has called on the British government to abandon the Eurofighter defence project as part of its effort to control public spending, the Observer reported Sunday.

Treasury sources told the weekly that cancelling Britain's £16-billion (\$25-billion) commitment to the project is an option being considered by the Treasury's review of all spending programmes.

The Observer said the Treasury would be delighted if the long-delayed European fighter project finally collapsed.

"We are hoping the Germans pull the plug on it," a source told the paper. Bonn is due to make its final decision on production of the plane by July 11, amid budget problems for the government of Chancellor Helmut Kohl and opposition Social Democrat demands that the project be scrapped.

Meanwhile the German Defence Ministry Sunday strongly denied claims in the weekly Der Spiegel that the plane's electronic control system had serious faults.

The latest issue of the newsmagazine, quoting experts, claimed that the system reacted so slowly that the aircraft could not be taken up to maximum speed. The onboard computer system required total revision, the weekly said, while the British-designed radar was so imprecise that the pilot could not judge whether a target was a single plane or a formation.

The German Defence Ministry described the report as erroneous, alleging that politicians opposed to the project were behind the misinformation.

"The current stage of development is in line with plans, the integration of the avionics is progressing

according to those plans, and the Defence Ministry has no information on a failure of the flight electronics and computers to meet requirements," a statement said.

The ministry said the seven Eurofighter prototypes had flown for 370 hours without incident. The onboard radar was operating according to the development programme.

"The criteria for technical development have been met," the ministry added. "There is no reason to put off a decision on purchase."

The Eurofighter — an air defence and air superiority fighter that can also be used for ground attacks — has been tangled up in political rivalry and controversy since it was first mooted in 1983.

Four nations are involved in its development — Britain, Germany, Italy and Spain.

35 feared dead in Pakistan landslide

PESHAWAR (AFP) — Thirty-five people are feared dead in a massive landslide that hit a remote village in northwest Pakistan, newspapers reported Sunday.

The Jang daily said 35 people were feared to have been killed and 19 bodies had been recovered from the rubble. The slide was triggered when lightning struck a hillside, the newspaper said.

Local officials had earlier said 24 people

were killed when the landslide Friday night crashed onto several homes in remote Kund Bajir village, located about 240 kilometres north of Peshawar.

Residents said Sunday there was little hope of finding any survivors among those still missing and believed to be buried under the mound of earth and boulders.

Rescue and recovery operations were underway, authorities said.

Indian premier is only waiting for fresh elections — analyst

NEW DELHI (AFP) — Indian Prime Minister Inder Kumar Gujral has become politically weaker after just two months in office and is resigned to facing fresh elections, analysts said Sunday.

Hemmed in by allies as well as an aggressive Hindu Nationalist opposition, the besieged prime minister was unlikely to last more than three or six months, analyst G.V.L. Narasimha Rao said.

"His authority is already in doubt," Mr. Rao told AFP. "It is going to suffer in coming months."

"He is functioning as a caretaker prime minister. He knows it."

Mr. Gujral, 77, became the consensus prime minister of the minority United Front government in April after the coalition squabbled to elect a successor to his predecessor, H.D. Deve Gowda.

But a section of Mr. Gujral's faction-ridden Janata Dal (People's Party), including its tainted President Laloo

Prasad Yadav, has turned against him. Mr. Yadav had lobbied to make Mr. Gujral the prime minister.

A belligerent Mr. Yadav has defied Mr. Gujral's appeal to resign as chief minister of the eastern state of Bihar after being charged with corruption, and has dared the prime minister to sack him.

The issue has snowballed into the biggest crisis for Mr. Gujral. It has divided both the Janata Dal and the United Front coalition, whose Communist partners are dead set against Mr. Yadav.

The main opposition and Hindu Nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has demanded that Mr. Gujral should either act over Mr. Yadav or quit.

A Communist leader in the government admitted Mr. Gujral was in a mess.

"Gujral should act (against Mr. Yadav)," the leader said on condition of anonymity. "It is a political problem and should be resolved politically."

He (Mr. Gujral) should not have allowed the problem to fester.

"Now Gujral looks too weak to act against his own colleague, that to someone who has lost all moral authority after being accused of corruption."

Besides the Yadav affair, Mr. Gujral also faces stiff opposition from Communists and the Congress (I) Party, which keeps him in power, to his plan to cut subsidies and hike the price of petroleum products.

His Defence Minister Mualayam Singh Yadav has drifted away from him, while two regional parties in his fragile coalition have been attacking each other publicly.

Mr. Yadav's critics within the Janata Dal also have no love for Mr. Gujral. Mr. Gujral's Party has only 46 members in the 545-seat parliament and 180-member United Front. The Congress tried to form its own coalition in April but failed.

Government soldiers defend Brazzaville airport runway

BRAZZAVILLE (AP) — Government soldiers defended the runway of the strategic Brazzaville airport after losing the control tower to private militiamen, a militia spokesman said.

Both sides have claimed control of the airport in recent days, but heavy fighting in the area has made clear that neither President Pascal Lissouba nor former dictator Denis Sassou-Nguesso has the advantage.

Valentine Ouezongo, a spokesman for Sassou-Nguesso, said Saturday that the government controlled one end of the runway, while his militia, known as the Cobras, held the control tower and an adjacent building that until last week had been the headquarters of a French military evacuation team.

The French pulled out after helping nearly 6,000 foreigners flee the Republic of Congo's civil war. Since their departure, the airport north of downtown Brazzaville — crucial to bringing in supplies and possible reinforcements — has been the main battleground.

The sound of mortar fire could be heard around the airport Saturday.

A 14-member mediation committee that included representatives of Mr. Lissouba and Mr. Sassou-Nguesso said in a statement Saturday that both sides had agreed to a peace plan calling for a ceasefire, a government of national unity to prepare for and oversee planned presidential elections, and the deployment of foreign peacekeepers in the Republic of Congo.

But with no let-up in the fighting Saturday, a day after the agreement was to have been struck, it was unclear whether Mr. Lissouba or Mr. Sassou-Nguesso felt bound by the committee's decisions.

"It's absurd to continue this fighting," he said in an interview. "We vigorously deplore this painful situation."

War broke out when Mr. Lissouba sent troops to disarm Mr. Sassou-Nguesso's Cobras, saying he wanted to avoid any disruption of elections scheduled July 27.

Teenage suspect's arrest in murder case shocks Japan

KOBE (AFP) — The arrest of a 14-year-old boy for beheading a handicapped teenager in an upmarket Japanese suburb left the nation relieved and bewildered Sunday following a month-long hunt on a trail of bizarre clues.

"I have mixed feelings. Why a junior high school student?," Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto told reporters in Tokyo. "I hate it because I have children of his age."

In the search for the killer, police systematically called door-to-door at 2,500 houses in the residential area of Suma, a suburb of Kobe, while frenzied media had been looking for a man in his 20s or even in his 40s who was reportedly seen at the crime scene in a black car.

"I've imagined the killer to be as old as 45," said Terumi Maeda, 34, as she waited in a crowd of onlookers Sunday for a glimpse of the suspect — who was not identified because of his age — as he was led away from the Suma police station to the Kobe prosecutors' office.

"I wonder how the parents can raise a 14-year-old to be that cruel," said the mother of a one-year-old baby girl. "Anyway, I feel relieved for now."

The murderer, in a cryptic hate-filled letter sent earlier to the Kobe Shimbun, expressed deep anger at Japan's education system and society at large.

And the arrest Saturday sparked an outpouring of soul-searching about how such a grisly murder could occur in Japan.

"The environment of information via screens such as electronic games is alienating children further and further from reality," the influential Asahi newspaper cried in an editorial.

The mass-circulation Yomiuri newspaper said the fact that a teenager was the alleged culprit was as "surprising and shocking" as the brutal method of the murder itself.

"Boys are exposed to detrimental information through (sexual) telephone clubs, the Internet and comics from early ages," it said.

Police said the boy had admitted to the murder of 11-year-old schoolboy Jun Hase, the mentally handicapped son of a local doctor. They found a knife believed to be the murder weapon at the teenager's home earlier Saturday.

The culprit, the eldest of three brothers, was described by neighbours as an "ordinary boy" who enjoyed playing table tennis with his family but kept a low profile at school.

But he was also said to have read a Japanese translation of Unsolved Crimes based on the so-called Zodiac killings, a series of six unsolved murders in the United States in the 1960s.

Police allege the killer was "an acquaintance" of Hase and strangled him on May 24. He cut off his head the next day on a hill near Hase's elementary school.

On May 27, the sixth grader's severed head was found at the gate of the junior high school where the arrested teenager went to school. Hase's headless body was discovered later the same day on the hill.

Residents also found a headless pigeon near the same school in early May and two dead cats, whose limbs were mutilated, at the school gate a few days before Hase's head was found.

Police also found a bizarre note in the victim's month.

The note contained Chinese characters including those meaning "rose," "wine," and "devil." It also contained defiant messages such as "can you stop me?"



Japanese police have arrested a 14-year-old boy on suspicion of murdering 11-year-old schoolboy Jun Hase who is seen in the file photo. The suspect was arrested in the city of Kobe in western Japan where the beheading of the 11-year-old boy took place on May 27, 1997 (Keuter photo)

and "I enjoy killing people."

It referred to victims as "vegetables" and warned the murder was "the beginning of a game."

The writer then threatened to murder three new victims a week in a letter sent to the local newspaper in early June.

"It is a big mistake to think I am a baby criminal who can only kill children," the note said. "I can feel at ease and be freed from habitual hatred only when I am killing. Only other people's pain can ease my pain."

The brutal murder shocked the nation and led to a run on sales of security alarms and special media coverage of anti-crime goods. Television networks refrained from airing scenes containing images of severed heads.

Some 500 police had been patrolling the area since Hase's death, while community groups guarded children going to school.

News reports said the arrested teenager was also implicated in attacks on two elementary school girls in Suma in March. One of the girls was beaten to death and the other was stabbed with a knife and seriously injured.

After 36 fearful days, children were seen returning Sunday to parks and school yards in warm sunshine after a typhoon swept across Japan.

"Parents may feel relieved. But children are still worried," said a 47-year-old father while his son played soccer at the elementary school where Hase had been a student.

Typhoon fizzles out; 2 dead, 1 missing in Japan

TOKYO (AFP) — Typhoon Peter fizzled out Sunday after cutting across the Japanese islands into the Pacific overnight, leaving three people dead or missing and 38 injured in heavy winds and downpour.

One U.S. Marine was killed and another missing after they jumped into a raging river near the U.S. Marine Corps base of Iwakuni, near the southern Japanese city of Hiroshima, police said.

The National Police Agency said two trains were derailed, injuring at least 23 passengers and conductors.

A 44-year-old nurse drowned after falling into a swelling river in Oita prefecture on the southern main island of Kyushu after the typhoon slammed into the main Japanese archipelago from the East China Sea mid-Saturday.

Three U.S. Marines jumped into a river in Iwakuni, police said. One was found drowned later and another remained unaccounted for Sunday.

"Five Marines were playing on the riverside and three of them jumped into the river for the fun of it," an Iwakuni police spokesman said. "They were not under the influence of alcohol or anything."

The unseasonal typhoon dwindled into a depression early Sunday after swerving out to the Pacific through Fukushima, north of Tokyo, at a speed of about 85 kilometres per hour, the Meteorological Agency said.

It destroyed one house and damaged 20 others while flooding 177 houses, the National Police Agency said. It also triggered 101 landslides, damaged roads at six points and led a river to crest

at one point. It was the eighth typhoon spawned in the northwestern Pacific this year and second to hit Japan. But typhoons rarely reach the Japanese islands in June and it was the first time since 1951 that two typhoons hit Japan in the month.

Nearly 500 airline flights and dozens of ferry services were cancelled. At least 12 passengers were injured and rushed to hospital after a four-car train carrying 40 people was derailed late Saturday in the western city of Fukushima, local fire department and police said.

"One train car fell down sideways, but passengers were injured only slightly," a fire department official said.

Eleven passengers were slightly injured when another train was derailed in the northern prefecture of Miyagi, when it slammed into a mudslide caused by the typhoon, local police said. Six domestic airlines said they had grounded 487 flights, inconveniencing an estimated 53,000 passengers. Japan Airlines cancelled two international flights between Kyushu's main city, Fukuoka, and the South Korean capital, Seoul.

Dozens of ferry runs, including regular international services between Fukuoka and the South Korean port of Pusan, were also cancelled.

Train services were sharply curtailed on Kyushu Island and parts of other main islands such as Honshu and Shikoku, rail officials said.

Japan's super-express Bullet Train runs were hampered on and off, disrupting travel plans of an estimated 60,000 passengers.

Burma opposition denies foreign funding charge

RANGOON (R) — Burma's opposition National League for Democracy (NLD) Sunday denied charges made last week by the ruling military junta that the NLD had accepted foreign financial assistance.

"The NLD does not accept foreign financial assistance on principle," the party's Vice-Chairman U Kyi Maung told a news conference.

The NLD and its leader Aung San Suu Kyi had been offered foreign funding in the past but had turned it down as large amounts of money were not needed to maintain the party, he said.

"On a few occasions in the past some foreigners offered such financial donations to Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and she turned them down. Why do we need such large sums of money while we can live within our means?" Mr. U Kyi Maung added.

Mr. U Kyi Maung said he would discuss the issue with Ms. Aung San Suu Kyi, the Nobel Peace Laureate and party leader, but felt confident that the party had adhered to its previous commitments not to accept foreign funding.

he would discuss the issue with Ms. Aung San Suu Kyi, the Nobel Peace Laureate and party leader, but felt confident that the party had adhered to its previous commitments not to accept foreign funding.

"I don't think she would have taken it because it is against our principles. I am not even sure whether such financial assistance was really offered or not," he said.

Secretary One, Lieutenant General Khin Nyunt, of the ruling State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) said Friday that the NLD had accepted \$85,200 from two covert U.S. agents earlier this year.

The United States, which imposed economic sanctions on Burma in early June, citing SLORC's "severe repression" and poor human rights record, has denied its agents were involved.

Lt. Gen. Khin Nyunt also linked the NLD and exiled opposition groups to bombings in Rangoon in the last few months.

Exiled dissident groups have denied the allegations which they said are aimed at undermining pro-democracy groups opposed to SLORC and providing a pretext for a further crackdown on democratic activities.

"It is clear that by its fabricated lies the SLORC is attempting to discredit the pro-democracy forces and, at the same time, to find a pretext for increasing its repression against the NLD and Daw Aung San Suu Kyi," the self-proclaimed Burmese government in exile, the National Coalition Government of the Union of Burma, said Saturday.

Ms. Suu Kyi's NLD won an election by a landslide in 1990, which the SLORC never recognised. In recent months supporters have been denied access to Ms. Suu Kyi's house by the government and opposition gatherings have been foiled by gov-

ernment arrests of party members.

Mr. U Kyi Maung also denied recent speculation that the NLD may rejoin a government-appointed national convention to draft a new constitution for Burma.

"But we asked them whether they had changed their procedures in order that we can join it," he said.

He said the NLD still refused to rejoin the gathering in protest against principles laid down by the SLORC at the convention which said the military would hold 25 per cent of the seats in any future parliament, would retain the right to retake power whenever it deemed necessary, and that the future Burmese president would be an ex-military officer.

The NLD angered the SLORC by walking out of the convention in late 1995 after Ms. Suu Kyi was released from six years of house arrest. The convention has been meeting infrequently and the last meeting was held in March 1996.



Albanian President Sali Berisha greets supporters when getting into his car after he voted in a central Tirana polling station Sunday. Albania held its general elections three months after the collapsed Pyramid schemes pushed the country into armed turmoil (Reuters photo)

Albanians vote in hope of halting chaos

TIRANA (R) — Albanians voted Sunday in a general election seen as a crucial step towards restoring order in a country racked by months of violence.

European nations and the United States, which have sent hundreds of observers to monitor the poll, hope the election will restore political stability after more than 1,500 people were killed in months of disorder sparked by the collapse of Pyramid investment schemes.

The Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), which is helping Albanian authorities run the poll, said Saturday that voting would go ahead even though ballots had yet to arrive in some remote polling stations.

"Some polling stations may open late but some may not even open at all," OSCE election coordinator Tony Welch said, adding that these were expected to be small stations deep inside mountainous territory with just a handful of voters.

The OSCE and other international bodies such as the council of Europe have

already signalled that Albania's fourth multi-party poll since the collapse of communism in 1990 was unlikely to meet all the standards of a free and fair election.

The election campaign was conducted under a state of emergency imposed on March 2 to try to quell the unrest. But a 10 p.m. to 5 a.m. curfew has been lifted just for election day.

The poll, being held just 13 months after a general election widely regarded as seriously flawed, pits President Sali Berisha's Democrats against the Socialist Party and more than 20 other political parties.

The Democrats are defending the 122 seats, out of a total of 155, they won in the 1996 election. More than a thousand candidates are competing for 115 seats contested in a majority vote, while 40 other seats will be shared out through a proportional system.

Voters were also being asked in a referendum whether they favoured restoring the monarchy. But few people believe exiled King Lekë, who has toured the

country extensively, has much chance of returning to the throne.

Western governments are hoping that all Albania's political parties will accept the results, but many diplomats in Tirana have their doubts.

Mr. Berisha, one of the first to vote in a school near his modest apartment in central Tirana, insisted he would respect the outcome of the poll.

"I am definitely going to accept the results. I will fully recognise the elections," Mr. Berisha told reporters.

Asked if he would step down if his party lost, he said it was too early to consider the idea of "cohabitation" in Albania, suggesting he would be unable to work with a leftist government if the result is close.

His main political rival, Socialist leader Fatos Nano, released from jail in March after being convicted on fraud charges in 1994, also voted in Tirana.

"Tomorrow will be a new day, a day of permanent peace," Mr. Nano told reporters. "It will be a day

when we should urgently begin the rebuilding of institutions, of the economy, and the restoration of order and calm."

Much of the south of the country remains outside government control and bringing order back to the region remains one of the biggest problems facing any new administration.

In the southern Adriatic port of Sarande, voters queued up early to cast their ballot with international monitors looking on and armoured vehicles posted on the outskirts of the town.

Local electoral committee members said some problems had arisen with a few people who had registered but could not find their names on the register.

"We don't expect trouble here. We all know each other," said Odhise Dashi, a local election official in the village of Cuka, 10 kilometres outside Sarande.

In the port of Vlore, the focal point of unrest in March, and in the town of Gjirokastra near the Greek border, voting got underway in a reasonably calm atmosphere, correspondents said.

9,000 Afghan refugees cross into Turkmenistan

ALMATY (R) — At least 9,000 Afghan refugees have fled to Turkmenistan from war-torn areas of northern Afghanistan in the last week, a senior aid official said Sunday.

"The figure is accurate," Bob McKerrrow, the head of the Almaty-based regional mission of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, told Reuters.

He said the refugees were concentrated in three locations in a desert area on the Afghan-Turkmen border.

The statement faxed to Reuters earlier Sunday from the federation's headquarters said the refugees had fled from fighting in the town of Mari Chak on the Afghan side of the Murghab River.

Forces of Uzbek General Abdul Malik are fighting in northern Afghanistan against the purist Islamic

Talebani militia, which controls most of the country and is battling to regain control of major strategic points in the north lost to opposition troops last month.

Former Soviet republics neighbouring Afghanistan have voiced concern that the fighting between Islamic Taleban militia and local warlords for control over northern Afghanistan would trigger an exodus of civilians, but no major influx of refugees had been reported so far.

"The sources that we have show quite clearly that the (refugee) influx is the result of fighting between the Taleban and what is loosely known as Malik's forces," Mr. McKerrrow said.

Turkmen authorities allowed the refugees into a no man's land on the Turkmen side of the border Monday last week to escape

serious fighting on the Afghan side," the statement said.

It said the refugees were suffering from high temperatures reaching a sweltering 45 degrees Celsius (113 Fahrenheit) in the shade.

"Some of the refugees have war wounds, including a child shot while fetching water. The refugee population includes 40 pregnant women and 50 women who gave birth in the past week," the statement said.

Mr. McKerrrow said the federation's workers had managed to develop "reasonable" cooperation with the Turkmen side, including joint inspections of refugee camps.

"The refugees... appear to have enough supplies to last one week. The international federation is making arrangements to send food, tents and medical supplies to the area within the next

two days," the statement said.

Meanwhile, Taleban militiamen have repulsed five opposition attacks in the past four days in the northern province of Kunduz, the Afghan Islamic Press (AIP) reported Saturday, quoting Taleban officials.

The private information service quoted the unidentified officials as saying the Islamic militia had killed 16 opposition troops and suffered 16 dead in its own ranks during the clashes.

The officials told the Pakistan-based agency that 218 opposition fighters, including four commanders, had been captured by the Taleban troops.

The main Kunduz City in the northern province, which has the same name, was bombed twice by an opposition jet Saturday, AIP said, adding that there was no report of casualties.

Soldiers accused of killing civilians in Sierra Leone

FREETOWN (AP) — Soldiers killed at least 25 villagers in southern Sierra Leone, according to witnesses who reached the capital Saturday after fleeing a region that has been a center of opposition to the country's new military junta.

Violence has continued since last month's military coup, despite pledges by military leader Major Johnny Paul Koroma that he will restore order in a country just emerging from six years of civil war.

The witnesses, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said the dead included the father of Vice-President Joseph Demby, who along with President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah was ousted by low-ranking soldiers last month. The attacks occurred Thursday night in villages near Bo, a town that holds the military headquarters town near the Liberian border, 240 kilometres southwest of Freetown.

Maj. Koroma took over Sierra Leone last month after being freed in a raid by soldiers on a Freetown prison. Maj. Koroma and eight co-defendants had been jailed since September on charges of conspiring to overthrow Mr. Kabbah.

Both Mr. Kabbah and Mr. Demby are in exile in neighbouring Guinea.

Thousands of refugees have streamed from Sierra Leone into Liberia in recent days bringing reports of fighting along the Liberian border between the Sierra Leonean army and the Kamajor, a militia backing the ousted government.

Maj. Koroma's junta has refused to comment on the fight-

ing. Refugees from the Bo area told reporters in Freetown that soldiers were apparently searching for Kamajor fighters when they surrounded the home of Albert Sami Demby, a traditional chief. The soldiers took the chief from his compound and shot him in the stomach, killing him, witnesses said.

The soldiers then attacked two other villages, killing another chief and at least 25 other civilians, witnesses said.

In addition to those reports Saturday, the independent newspaper Voice of the People said unidentified attackers firing automatic rifles, grenade launchers and mortars forced all the residents of Moyamba to flee the town last week. Moyamba, 190 kilometres south of Freetown, was a stronghold of Mr. Kabbah's Sierra Leone People's Party.

Maj. Koroma has portrayed himself as committed to peace, and accused Mr. Kabbah of retreating from a truce agreement with the Revolutionary United Front (RUF). The RUF, which fought a series of Sierra Leonean governments beginning in 1991, has thrown its support to Maj. Koroma.

In a statement Saturday, Maj. Koroma's Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) asked neighboring countries to reconsider efforts to isolate the military regime.

After meeting in Guinea last week, 14 African foreign secretaries recommended negotiations, economic sanctions and even force as possible means of restoring Mr. Kabbah to power in Sierra Leone.

Serbian opposition breaks up as Draskovic goes it alone

BELGRADE (AFP) — The opposition coalition which forced Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic to concede its victories in local elections four months ago was in ruins Sunday after leader Vuk Draskovic said his party would go it alone in future polls.

Mr. Draskovic told a convention of his Serb Renewal Party that the party would fight the forthcoming legislative and presidential elections in Serbia without the other two members of the Together Coalition.

Mr. Draskovic, who was reelected head of the party, blamed the other two partners, the Democratic Party of Belgrade Mayor Zoran Djindjic and the civic alliance of Vesna Pesic, for the break-up of the coalition.

The decision came as little surprise, as the coalition had been clearly heading for collapse for several weeks, largely due to rivalry between Mr. Draskovic and Mr. Djindjic.

The leaders no longer met, but insulted each other through the media and in communiques, to the disappointment of their supporters.

The first signs of disagreement began to appear during the 88 days of mass anti-government demonstrations after the faked November local elections which brought Belgrade to a halt. Mr. Draskovic said.

Mr. Djindjic had a secret meeting at the time with Mr. Milosevic but only revealed it two months later. He has also refused to back Mr. Draskovic for the upcoming

presidential elections, and has demanded that the coalition be enlarged.

Mr. Draskovic also wants to see the monarchy restored in Serbia, telling the convention Saturday that it was the best way to bring democracy to the state.

Mr. Djindjic was present at the convention, saying it was a matter of "good political manners and to maintain a minimum of coordination to obtain better electoral conditions."

Otherwise, he said, a democratic Serbia would be the great loser.

The collapse of the coalition has enabled Mr. Milosevic and his party to regain influence after the serious setback caused by the demonstrations of last winter.

Mr. Milosevic has won

the backing of the ruling party in Montenegro, the junior partner with Serbia in the Yugoslav Federation, for his bid to become president of Yugoslavia.

The mandate of President Zoran Lilic runs out Wednesday, but no session of the federal parliament has been scheduled to elect his successor, even though Mr. Milosevic is the only candidate.

The end of the Together Coalition cannot help but disappoint the hundreds of thousands who marched in Belgrade to force the Mr. Milosevic regime to recognise opposition victories in the local elections.

"Together should pay for the shoes we wore out during the 88 days of protest," one militant said.

Mir space crew prepares for repair work

MOSCOW (R) — An American and two Russians spent a quiet night on their damaged space station Mir and were busy Sunday preparing for difficult repairs which will involve a spacewalk, a spokeswoman for the mission control said.

"Michael Foale, Vasily Tsibilyev and Alexander Lazutkin went to bed at 8.00 p.m. (1600 GMT) and the control equipment showed their sleep was undisturbed until morning," she said.

"From the morning the three resumed dismantling some secondary equipment in the crowded station clearing the space needed to do their spacewalks," added the spokeswoman contacted by telephone in the Mission Control headquarters outside Moscow.

Mir lost between 30 and 40 per cent of its electric power potential after collision with an unmanned cargo craft Progress during manual docking training Wednesday. A scientific module Spektr earlier docked to Mir was damaged during the collision.

The U.S. physicist Foale, 40, Commander Tsibilyev, 43, and Flight Engineer Lazutkin, 39, were due to check how the station's batteries were charging and try to increase their oxygen supply.

The spokeswoman said additional systems were being activated as Mir's batteries charge, including the station's toilet and the greenhouse.

The two Russians will do spacewalks to enter the Spektr scientific module, holed by a cargo craft during docking manoeuvres, while Mr. Foale sits in the escape capsule for safety.

They will have to install a modified hatch in Spektr's doorway so that cables can be connected to tap electricity from the module's solar arrays.

According to officials from the U.S. space agency NASA, if the hatch to Spektr cannot be resealed, the crew will have to abandon ship.

Vladimir Solovyov, who is responsible for flight coordination at the mission control said Saturday a cargo craft would be launched on July 5 to take equipment to Mir. He expected the repairs to be done between July 10 and 14.

Mr. Tsibilyev has voiced some doubts about the risky repairs that lie ahead after the worst accident of Mir's 11 years in space.

"I have never done this kind of work. Without training, it will not be possible to do this job," he said Saturday. But Mr. Solovyov said the cosmonauts will be offered all assistance.

N. Korea expected to agree to preparatory peace talks

NEW YORK (AFP) — The United States was to meet here Monday with North and South Korea, with Pyongyang expected to announce that it will join preparatory negotiations on a permanent Korean peace treaty.

North Korean Deputy Foreign Minister Kim Kye-gwan, U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Charles Kartman, and South Korean Assistant Foreign Minister Song Young-shik were to lead their respective delegations to talks at the New York Palace Hotel.

But Korea experts remained cautious about the negotiations, noting the sporadic nature of North Korea's enthusiasm for the proposed peace talks and the vast differences that remain among the governments involved.

If Pyongyang does agree to go ahead with the preparatory talks, it will be largely out of hunger, analysts say.

"I don't expect any breakthroughs," Steve Linton, a Korea expert and head of a charity that makes frequent visits to the reclusive Communist country, said Friday.

"The North Koreans are responding at the lowest level just to keep aid coming in," said Mr. Linton, who re-

turned June 20 from a seven-day visit to Sinuiju and Pyongyang.

"And North Korea, which by all accounts is suffering extreme food shortages, indeed appears desperate," he added.

The United States has already provided some \$33 million worth of food aid to North Korea and officials have made clear that more would follow when the United Nations makes a new appeal.

One aid worker who recently visited the western part of North Korea told AFP he had seen people "along the train tracks, scattered around" who appeared to be dead or dying from hunger.

But the aid official, who asked not to be named, said his party saw noticeably fewer of those people than they did on a previous trip in May. "I think a lot of them may have died," he said.

Analysts here caution that a previous round of talks here led by the same officials ended inconclusively in April, despite strong indications from the Americans that they believed a breakthrough was imminent.

Mr. Kim failed to show up for two of the last rounds, saying he was awaiting final instructions from Pyongyang.

It later became clear that North Korea had sought massive food aid as a precondition to entering peace talks, which the United States rejected.

But the tone of a North Korean announcement Wednesday, made on the anniversary of the outbreak of the 1950-53 Korean War, suggested that some key obstacles had been removed.

The team from Pyongyang "is ready to cooperate to produce significant results in those talks," the number-two official at North Korea's U.N. mission said Wednesday.

In Seoul, South Korea's Foreign Ministry said the meeting Monday would result in the announcement of a date and place for preparatory peace talks, including China, probably in Geneva or New York in August.

Robert Manning, an Asia scholar at the Progressive Policy Institute here, said the New York talks would likely focus on an agenda for the eventual four-party peace talks.

North and South Korea fought to a bitter stalemate in 1953, eventually signing an armistice rather than a peace treaty and agreeing to divide the peninsula into a Communist North and capitalist South.

Virus in Malaysia claims 30th child victim

KUALA LUMPUR (R) — A fatal airborne virus has claimed its 30th child victim with international medical experts still unable to identify the mysterious killer, local newspapers said Sunday.

The eight-month-old victim died from acute viral myocarditis, or heart inflammation, in a hospital Saturday in the Sarawak logging town of Sibuan on Borneo Island, the Sunday Star newspaper reported.

The child was admitted to a nearby hospital Monday with only a fever and

cough, hospital authorities were quoted as saying.

All of the fatalities have been children in Sarawak and all have died of viral myocarditis linked to what health officials here say is a lethal strain of the Coxsackie virus.

Eighteen of the 30 victims were from Sarawak's Chinese community.

The outbreak of Coxsackie has caused hundreds of cases of the relatively benign foot-and-mouth disease in Sarawak and peninsular Malaysia, but has also led to the myocarditis in

Sarawak.

Health Minister Chua Jui Meng said since May 29, 736 children had been admitted to hospitals with 60 still in care, the New Sunday Times reported.

Sarawak Deputy Chief Minister George Chan said more U.S. experts from Atlanta's Centres for Disease Control (CDC) would be brought in to identify the virus.

Apart from the CDC, the government has also brought in experts from Tokyo's Institute of Infectious Diseases.

Russian investigators say train blast may not have been intentional

MOSCOW (AFP) — Officials investigating a blast which killed five people on a Moscow-Saint Petersburg express train now believe it was unlikely to have been a "terrorist attack," ITAR-TASS news agency reported.

Viktor Korzhakov, deputy head of the North-Western Interior Transportation Department, was quoted as saying investigators had found no one on the list of passengers whom they suspected of having intentionally set off the blast.

He said officials were now looking into the possibility that the explosion was a suicide or caused by the improper handling of an explosive device.

Mr. Korzhakov noted that the damage caused by the blast indicated the bomb was most probably not homemade.

Four people were killed

immediately when a bomb went off in a washroom on the busy Number 24 train Friday about 200 kilometres from St. Petersburg, between Okulovka and Bologoy stations.

The fifth died in hospital, where 11 injured travellers were being treated, the Russian Ministry for Emergency situations said.

Investigators suspected the bomb had power equal to 200 to 400 grammes of TNT.

But the blast — on a train that is typically crowded during the summer months — made many Russians fear an upsurge in bomb attacks in public places.

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, followed by the chaotic rise of a market economy, homemade explosive devices have become commonplace in Russia, notably for underworld settling of accounts.

Railways Minister Nikolai Aksenenko, at the scene, called upon Russia security forces to "carry out very serious work" to avoid repeat incidents.

Otherwise, he said, a "psychosis of bomb attacks" would hit Russia.

Last November, a bomb attack at a Moscow cemetery, related to a settling of accounts, killed 14 people — after a summer of terror in the Russian capital.

On June 11, 1996, a bomb attack in the Moscow subway killed four and injured 11, no one claimed responsibility.

Many people were injured when two bombs went off a month later on a trolleybus.

Other bombings happened last spring in trains or stations in the Caucasus, with two dying in Piatigorsk Station and two others in Armavir Station.

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Sensible proposal

THE ANNOUNCEMENT by Deputy Prime Minister for Development Affairs Jawad Anani that the government is considering selling some of its shares in public companies, destined to be privatised, to state employees, civil servants and people with little savings is a very imaginative move that will address many of the imbalances created by decades of government intervention in the economic process and the fears of many people who suspect that public entities might end up in the hands of the wealthy few.

Dr. Anani said the government plans to sell 33 per cent of its shares in government-owned entities, starting with the Jordan Cement Factories Company, and that the revenue will be used to set up a special "fund for the future generations." The interests of the fund, the minister said, will be invested in developmental projects that would benefit the poor.

Among the other public entities that the government aims to sell all or part of are the Arab Potash Company, the Jordan Public Transport Corporation, Royal Jordanian, the Aqaba Railway Corporation and the Jordan Tourism and Spa Complex.

What is missing from the list is the media organisations such as Jordan Radio and Television and the newspapers. Without turning these too into private or at least autonomous bodies, there will be no room for creativity, ingenuity and competitiveness.

Many die-hard socialists and opposition figures in the country oppose the government drive of privatisation for fear that all so-called strategic industries, like mining, media and transport, would end up in the hands of the few financial elite who might not have the good of the average man at heart. That argument has proven true in many experiments all over the world. But by involving as many people as possible in owning shares in the new companies, the government would create a new economic atmosphere conducive to increased productivity and efficiency.

What remains to be seen is whether the government will put in motion the whole process of privatisation soon and whether it will go ahead with its plan to sell some of its shares to the less fortunate. The intention of doing so in itself needs to be commended and encouraged. What the government needs to do meanwhile, is devise the appropriate mechanism for involving low-income people in the franchise.

In this regard, it is suspected that only very few civil servants have any savings in their bank accounts. Thus, and since the revenues from the sale of the government shares will go to the "Generations Fund," employees and low-income people could be sold the bulk of their shares on credit provided they settle their accounts later from the profit they make on those shares. This could be one consideration. But we are sure our economists and bureaucrats can come up with many more formulas to address the issue. What is important at the moment is to turn Dr. Anani's proposal into a binding commitment.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

FAHED FANEK, a writer for Al Ra'i, said that it is in the interest of the Palestinians to resume negotiations with Israel in order to secure the restoration of their lost lands, but the Netanyahu government has an interest in blocking these negotiations by any means. The Israelis stopped negotiations once, following the suicide attacks in Tel Aviv, while the Palestinians halted them after Israel started building the settlement on Jabal Abu Ghneim, said the writer. He added that neither the U.S. Middle East envoy nor the Egyptian mediator succeeded in convincing the two sides to return to the negotiating table; and as the time passes, the Palestinians are the losing party because the Israelis are going ahead with the settlement plans and are not affected in the least by the closure of the Palestinian territories or by the sufferings of the Palestinians. It is time for the Palestinian leadership to deprive Mr. Netanyahu of this comfortable situation and end the suffering of the Palestinian people, said the writer. As all other mediators have failed to give impetus to the peace negotiations, said the writer, one can only hope that King Hussein will step in and end the deadlock. The writer said that King Hussein is eligible to do that since he has a great influence on the Israeli public which is the only power that can influence Mr. Netanyahu's moves.

A WRITER for Al Dustour said that Baghdad indirectly benefits from Turkey's incursions in its northern territory while Ankara and Tel Aviv have a direct interest in the military operations against the Kurds. Oreib Rintawi said Turkey's military, which is opposed to the Islamists, whose power has been on the increase, is diverting the Turkish public opinion towards an external issue and trying to gain popularity in Turkey for its fight against the Kurds who, they claim, have been causing a severe headache to the Turks. As for Israel, said the writer, it is in its own interest to divert the world public attention from its illegal practices against the Palestinians and its settlement programmes and continued occupation of Arab lands by stirring new troubles in other spots in the Middle East region. Regarding Iraq, he said, the Turkish invasion was a chance to bring to world attention the need for a lasting settlement that would end the embargo on it and was a chance for the Kurds to seek to return to the Iraqi homeland and end their enmity towards Baghdad. The invasion, he added, has also precipitated Syria's steps towards reconciliation with Iraq.

Economic Review

Antitrust legislation helps improve competitiveness

By Dr. Yusuf Mansur

A FEW days ago, a draft of Jordan's first Competition/Antitrust Law was circulated to business leaders and representatives to help them get familiarised with the contents of the legislation in preparation for a workshop at the Amman Chamber of Industry to debate the law and elicit their views on the topic.

The debate that ensued and the comments raised by the workshop audience illustrated not only the dissatisfaction of some (mainly business leaders) with any type of antitrust legislation but also the fact that presenting policy matters to the non-specialised public is still in its infancy.

Legislation that is not well explained to people invariably fails; this piece of legislation is extremely important to the long-term health of the Jordanian economic growth and needs to be understood by the public and private sector.

The Draft Competition Law makes it illegal for firms to behave in a monopolistic manner. Anti-competitive business practices that have become chronic in Jordan will be made illegal under the law. Dominant firm(s) that cut prices to below cost to prevent some firms from entering a market or competing will be prohibited from doing so. Competitors who agree among themselves to fix the price or output of a product, in other words act as a monopolist, will be fined and prosecuted. Agreements among bidders to rig bids by not bidding above a certain price (forming price rings) or selling the bidding right — a normal practice among Jordanian contractors — will become illegal under this law. Organisations that are formed to curb competition in price, quality or quantity are forbidden. All because these pacts only limit or weaken competition and create monopolies.

What is so bad about monopolies? They waste resources because monopolists do not produce efficiently in the absence of competition. Monopolies create unemployment as they hire less people than competing firms only to produce less output. They lower wages because they have no incentive to produce high quality products and therefore hire less skilled labour; they pre-

vent the availability of new technologies and know-how as inventors and new entrepreneurs are driven out of or blocked from the market by wealthy, large-size incumbents; and they reduce the welfare of consumers who are to pay high prices for low quality products — a problem that ails the Jordanian industry in general.

In other words, by introducing more competition in Jordanian markets, unemployment will be reduced, wages will rise and consumer welfare will increase. Myopic business owners have every reason to fight this law, especially in the short run, primarily because of self-interest. However, they too must be reminded that markets do not stay protected forever and that some time in the future they too will need such a law to protect them from the monopolistic practices of others. In the long run, it is to their advantage to have antitrust legislation introduced.

Furthermore, Jordan is not singular in introducing this law. Every industrial nation has antitrust laws; even non-industrial nations and many Arab countries, including Egypt, have recently acquired some form of antitrust legislation. In fact, all countries that aspire to improve the competitiveness of their industries have long realised that this cannot be achieved without the advent of antitrust legislation.

Why then the negative feeling towards this law in Jordan? Two primary reasons: the first is that the business leaders do not see, yet, the benefits of having such a law, the second is that the consumer has not been informed of the benefits of such a law. The solution for either case is the preparation of seminars and workshops (which should be recorded professionally and documented in booklets or other media forms for later use by as many people as possible).

Better still, more seminars and public fora are needed to inform immediately all parties of the intricacies of the antitrust legislation which are not only complex but also alien and practically unknown to Jordanian businesses, lawyers, judges, many economists and consumers. We have waited for this law for many years, let us not wait for many more.

After the lion dances, the rest is history

On the eve of the handover of Hong Kong to China, the stock market was booming and property prices soaring. The political rows between Britain and China showed no sign of affecting the colony's progress. So was Britain right after all to try to inject some democracy into Hong Kong at the 11th hour?

By Derek Ingram

AS POWER in Hong Kong slips away from Britain to China at the stroke of the midnight hour, to quote the eloquent words of Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru on India's independence just 50 years ago, the rest is history.

It is now left to the academics to pick over the bitter arguments of the decolonisation process. Did Britain play it right after the British and Chinese premiers of the day, Margaret Thatcher and Zhao Ziyang, signed the Memorandum of Understanding in 1984 that decreed the unique "one country, two systems" formula for Hong Kong?

Was it sensible for the British at the last moment — just two years before the handover — to introduce wide-ranging democracy after ruling colony autocratically for 143 years?

Was it reasonable to expect the Chinese to incorporate this most powerful economic component as part of their country under a form of government that was substantially different from the way it was in 1984?

The so-called Basic Law agreed between the governments in 1990 is clear enough. It says that "the socialist system and policies shall not be practised in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, and the previous capitalist system and way of life shall remain unchanged for 50 years."

The Chinese argue that the British changed the rules and that what they were being asked to inherit in 1997 was not what was agreed.

In the early 1990s the last colonial governor, Chris Patten, set about widening the franchise to elect a Hong Kong legislature that had been nominated in the past.

Beijing attacked him personally for this. But he did not act alone. The authority came from the government in London.

The new policy deeply divided the British diplo-

matic establishment. Sir Percy Cradock, former ambassador to Beijing and adviser to Thatcher for the 1984 talks, broke ranks and vehemently opposed the British move.

One point seems clear: the policy was not adopted as an attempt to make up for past political sins against the Hong Kong people or to put a better shine on British rule in the colony.

The calculation was this: it was best to move Hong Kong a little way along the road to democracy, even at the last minute, in the hope that some of it would stick in the years to come and even influence the development of China as a whole.

The Chinese plainly saw it as an attempt to poke democracy through their back door and they were not wholly wrong to do so. They reacted angrily, snubbing Patten on several occasions and giving him a most uncomfortable time.

But the British held their line to the end, refusing to recognise the transitional council that Beijing assembled cheekily over the border to make new laws even months before China assumed sovereignty.

The Chinese do not intend the transitional council to become the permanent legislative body. Within a year they will hold new elections under different rules and they have said the Democrats — members of the Democratic Party who won 19 of the 20 directly elected legislative seats in Patten's polls — will be able to stand.

The Democrats include fiercely independent figures such as Martin Lee and Emily Lau, and Christine Loh, who has now formed a separate party. All will be out of office at midnight on July 1, at least for the time being.

But it may be that when the dust has settled and July 1 is just a memory of fireworks, lion dances, laughter and tears, some of Patten's policy will have stuck.

It has certainly not affected optimism about Hong Kong's future. The stock

market continues to boom. Property prices have never been higher and there has been no mass exodus of the privileged, although some have prepared bolt-holes abroad just in case something goes wrong.

Nor do many of the appointments made by Patten's successor, the new Chief Executive Tung Chee-Hwa, indicate any intention to tear down the temple.

Patten's number two, Anson Chan, remains in place as chief secretary. So does Financial Secretary Donald Tsang. Andrew Li, the new chief justice, is highly respected. So are Elsie Leung, the Secretary for Justice, and Lily Yam, the new head of the Independent Commission Against Corruption.

Most significantly, the Chinese have appointed Ma Yuzhen to head their foreign ministry in Hong Kong. Ma is a veteran with wide experience and understanding of the West. He was a popular ambassador in London for many years with wide contacts.

What has happened in Hong Kong cannot be seen in isolation from what is happening on the mainland. Hong Kong has already become an economic power house for the mainland. Its aggressive entrepreneurs are driving along China's development with mind-blowing

speed.

It is said that Hong Kong people do not care about politics and democracy, only about making money. However, they have grown up in a different and freer environment from that of China. Many are people whose families fled from the communist regimes in China. Their outlook is different from that of the mainland Chinese.

China remains a regimented and autocratic society, but it is freer than it used to be and nothing will now stop it from becoming more so. It is still referred to as a communist country, but this is a misnomer.

Although the Basic Law says the socialist and capitalist systems will ride in tandem, the reality is that China is fast becoming capitalist. It is a one-party state that is not really socialist in the original sense of the word and certainly not communist.

Understandably, the Chinese leadership fears political infection from Hong Kong that could lead to an erosion of its own power — even to multi-partyism.

It may not have been wrong for Patten and Co to move things along a bit in Hong Kong. The verdict is for history.

Gemini News Service

Human Rights File

New laws cannot have retroactive effect

By Waleed M. Sadi

WE IN Jordan get embroiled in a legal quandary whenever we adopt legislation, whether in the form of temporary laws or otherwise, that purports to have a retroactive effect.

Recently, we have adopted amendments to the 1993 Press and Publications Law that aim to change the status of the law in more than one way, especially with regard to the capital requirements of newspapers.

On another front, banking rules have also been amended with retroactive effect. And I could go on citing examples of new legal guidelines which aim to change the legal regime not only for the future but also for the past, for those who acted in good faith in accordance with the laws that existed at the time. One classic example is the change of citizenship rights in the wake of the 1988 decision to break all legal and administrative relations with the West Bank and its people.

All these legislative actions have been taken in a manner that is openly contrary to practically all jurisdictions that I am familiar with, which ban the retroactive application of new laws in a prejudicial manner. If X was a citizen of the country in 1988, how could his citizenship be revoked by a new law? The same goes for a bank which established itself on the basis of an existing law only to discover, years after, that it will have to amend its financial structure to meet new financial regulations. All those affected by these changes — have acquired rights which cannot be taken away by new laws.

Normally new enactments should have effect as of their publication in the Official Gazette and on all situations arising after the law comes into force. By opting for a legal jurisprudence that allows the retroactive application of laws we have developed a legal chaos that cannot be conducive to either a favourable investment climate or to civil and political norms that could serve as a basis for real stability and progress.

The now controversial case in point is constituted by the recent amendments to the Press and Publications Law. Had the drafters aimed to apply the new rules, whatever they are, from there on, there would be

no legal problem.

By purporting to give the new financial regulations a retroactive effect, so that they may apply on already established newspapers, our legislators may have created a legal chaos in the Kingdom that could not be the mainstay of a modern state approaching the turn of the twentieth century.

Changing the punitive measures on all future violations does not pose a similar problem since there is no element of retroactivity in this sense, but requiring a newspaper to increase its capital before it can continue to operate does.

There is now also talk about examining the legality of establishing professional associations since the Constitution speaks of only labour unions and is near silent on the formation of professional associations.

Article 23 states that Jordanians have the right to establish free trade unions. Some of us would like to think that professional associations do not qualify as trade unions. There is mention in Article 16 of the Constitution, though, of the right of Jordanian to establish "jama'iat" (societies), in general terms, which some would interpret to include professional associations. Besides, all professional associations came into reality by virtue of specific laws. Some of us are in effect suggesting now that these laws are unconstitutional! This line of legal thinking would necessarily lead us to the absurd conclusion that only laws which refer to a specific article in the organic law of the land would be deemed constitutional. Yet we have laws on a range of issues which have no specific reference to any provision in the Constitution.

We have laws on agriculture, health, environment, to name but a few, which cannot be anchored to any specific article in the Constitution. The fact that the Constitution is quasi-silent on the establishment of professional associations cannot therefore be exploited to question the legality of professional associations.

This leads me to conclude that this country is in urgent need for a constitutional court to pass judgement on all these and related legal issues. In the absence of such a court, there will always be legal chaos and uncertainty.

LETTERS

Inaction helps no one

To the Editor:

FRANCESCA CIRIACI's article "Investors air disappointment over lack of work speed at Aqaba's South Coast" (Jordan Times, June 16, 1997) deserves to be praised for capturing the sense of frustration — and despair — that permeates investors, both national and foreign, in dealing with, and hopefully overcoming, government bureaucracy at high levels that tends to retard progress and impede development.

Yet, insofar as the ARAM/Pointe International joint venture to develop a resort complex and a 36-hole golf course is concerned, the inference that the developers are to blame for lack of progress is both unfair and erroneous, and might have emanated from a misreading of the situation.

As chairman of ARAM International Investments, I foresaw, and realised, more than three years ago, the true potential of Aqaba's South Coast, hitherto untapped.

Consequently, ARAM/Pointe International undertook lengthy negotiations with the supposedly autonomous Aqaba Region Authority (ARA) which culminated with the latter's issuing a letter of intent in May 1995 that was followed by a memorandum of understanding during December of the same year. The memorandum was approved by ARA's board and submitted to the Council of Ministers for final approval, in accordance with ARA's extant regulations. Nothing happened.

Dr. Fayez Khasawneh, president of ARA, in his great

enthusiasm to push the project forward, addressed the ex-prime minister, Abdul Karim Al Kabarit, almost a year ago. Dr. Khasawneh stressed in no uncertain terms the importance of the project, made very positive recommendations and sought the prime minister's approval to finalise negotiations and proceed with implementation.

The then prime minister, Mr. Kabarit, for reasons that we do not know, took no action. Despite subsequent representations by Dr. Khasawneh, he was unable to elicit approval. (Since, the project remains on hold).

It needs to be pointed out that one of the major reasons that result in missed opportunities is the sheer lack of sustaining momentum. In order to attract investors, Jordan cannot afford to be oblivious to developments in the region, and must therefore compete on equal terms. Needless to say, the Pointe International, ARAM's partners in the joint venture, have been tempted to seek worthwhile investment opportunities elsewhere. As a matter of fact, Sharm Al Sheikh poses severe competition to Aqaba in attracting tourists, regionally and internationally, to its shores.

The fact remains that in order to capitalise on opportunities as they are being created — and prevented — dilly-dallying to no one's good should be avoided.

Ali Ghandour,
Chairman,
ARAM International Investments,
Amman.

Israel's arms build-up — at the expense of America's armed forces

By Robert Fisk

THE CODING on the side of the missile fragment was difficult to read. When an Israeli helicopter pilot fired his rocket into the back of an ambulance in southern Lebanon on April 13 last year — killing four small children and two women — it detonated into dozens of pieces. But the legend "AGM 114C" identified it as a 5ft 3in American-made Hellfire — "AGM" stands for air-to-ground missile — jointly made by Rockwell International in Duluth, Georgia, and by Martin Marietta of Orlando, Florida. And it was with this information that I set off to the United States last spring, in the hope of meeting the men who made the missile — which tore to pieces the children and women in the Lebanese ambulance — little realising how long my journey would turn out to be.

When the Independent on Sunday's "Review" published my interviews with the men from the companies which now owned the missile-makers, Boeing and Lockheed, our front cover — dominated by a photograph of the missile fragment — caught the attention of two men in the American and European defence industries. One of them telephoned me in Beirut to say that the code number 04939 — clearly visible on the manufacturer's plate — proved that the missile had been made in the Lockheed Martin plant in Florida. The other source agreed to meet me in Europe with a list of NATO codings in his hand which proved that the Hellfire missile fired into the Lebanese ambulance had never been sold to the Israelis. The National Stock Number on the missile fragment, he pointed out, was in a 4-2-3-4 digit sequence, the second of which read "01". The Israeli coding would have been "31" — "01" stood for the United States. And the letter "M" on the lot number suggested it had been sold to the U.S. Marine Corps.

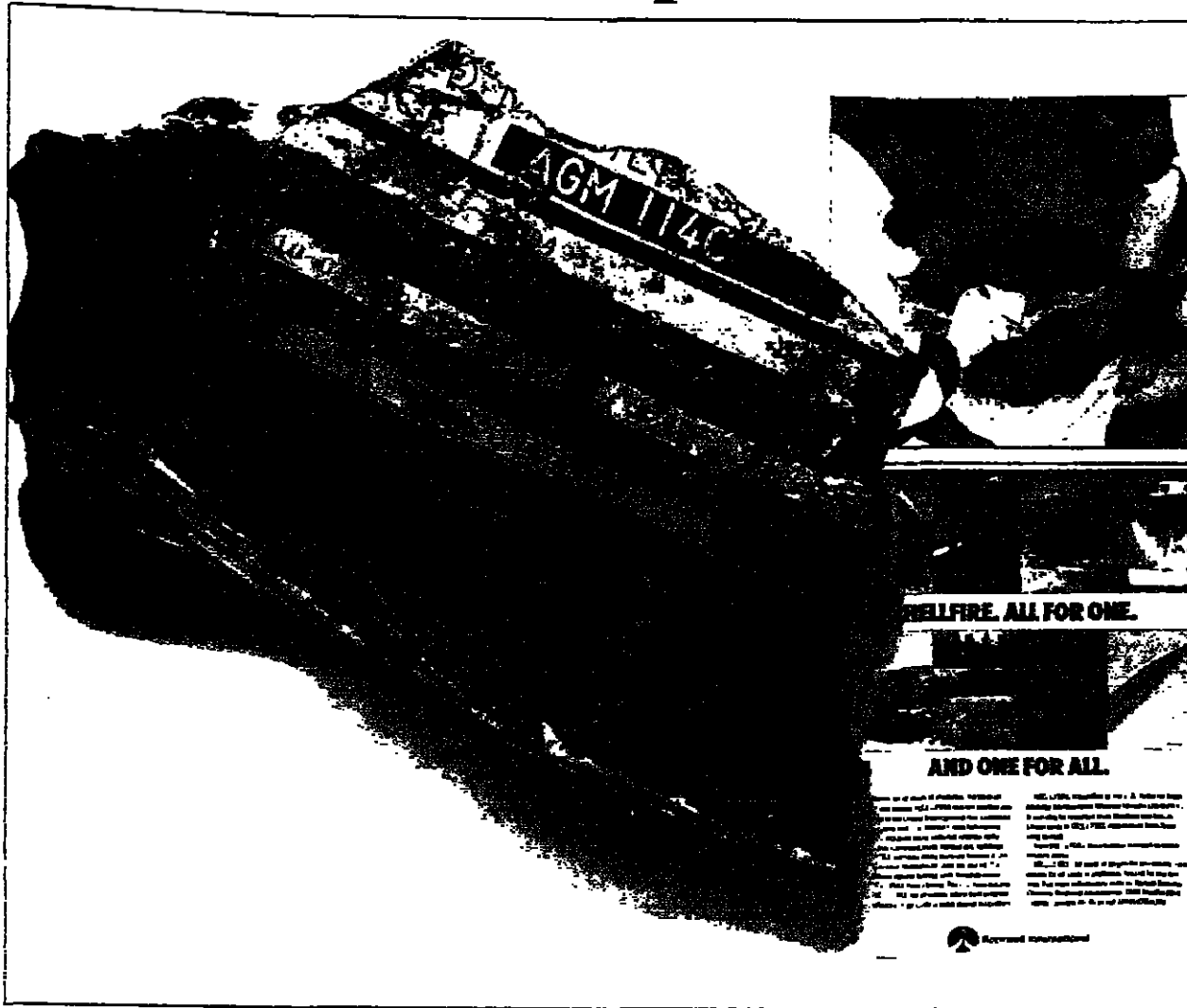
The Israeli pilot who targeted the ambulance in April last year — the Israelis claimed it was being driven by a member of the Hizbollah guerrilla movement, which was untrue — had in fact fired two missiles at the vehicle. One of them failed to detonate and the unexploded rocket revealed a complete set of code numbers which — according to our defence sources — proved that the missile was contracted for use by the U.S. armed forces in 1986 and

manufactured in 1988. It had been made just in time for the Gulf war and, according to The Independent's sources, may have been delivered to Israel immediately after the end of hostilities, probably by a U.S. marine amphibious craft which put into the munitions pier in Haifa harbour in spring 1991.

No one, of course, should be surprised that Israel uses the weaponry of its superpower ally. Its F-15 fighter-bombers, its A-10s reconnaissance aircraft, its field artillery and many of its tanks are U.S. made; Washington regularly reassures Israel of its loyalty by announcing the sale of aircraft and armour to Tel Aviv. When Saddam Hussein fired Scud rockets at Israel, America installed Patriot anti-missile missiles to defend the country. Israel relies upon U.S. firepower in much the same way as Syria depends upon Russian-made equipment — and as the Hizbollah needs Iran's comparatively puny military largess to fight its war against Israeli occupation forces inside southern Lebanon.

But the transfer of weaponry from U.S. armouries — with virtually no conditions attached to its use — is provoking anger among American military officers who believe that Israel's sympathisers inside the U.S. administration and on Capitol Hill are allowing Israel a de facto free access to the armouries of America's armed forces. The links between Israel and U.S. lawmakers — and armaments manufacturers — are now so close that there is no longer any public debate in Washington about the massive weapons transfers made to Israel or their use against civilian targets in Lebanon. When Lockheed was asked by The Independent to explain its policy towards Israel after it targeted Lockheed missiles at the ambulance, a spokesman for the company said he had "no information" about the event. When we offered to send photographs of the identification codings to Lockheed, the spokesman refused to accept them. In fact, Lockheed had no interest in cooperating with our inquiry — not least because it is a joint partner in missile development with the Israeli Rafael Aeronautics company.

But it is the virtually unchallenged ability of Israel to rifle through U.S. military stocks that has so upset serving and retired officers in the U.S. armed forces who, in the course of a two-week Independent



A fragment of the missile (main photo) used in the ambulance attack carries the '02' coding, showing it was made for U.S. armed forces. A 13-year-old girl, Manar Al Khaled (top), was one of the victims of the Hellfire missile, featured above in a corporate advertisement (Photos Najla Abujajah/top and Saleh Rifai/main)

inquiry into arms transfers to Israel, spoke of their fury at watching thousands of tanks and armour taken from U.S. inventories over a period of 20 years, and transferred to Israel despite objections from the Department of Defence. In the late 1970s, according to one officer who was serving in northern Europe, senior military personnel objected to a vast quantity of armour being withdrawn from Germany for transfer to Israel. "I was in the headquarters in Germany with the chairman of the joint chiefs and he went through the roof," he said. "We were told to hand over hundreds of tanks at very short notice — and this was at the height of the cold war. We were opposite the Fulda Gap and the Warsaw Pact was on the other side and we were screaming that we were depleting our assets at a moment of high European tension. The general was saying 'fuck them' — he used those words — but he was excluded from the decision. The Department of Defence were directed under orders to turn over the tanks — we didn't do it voluntarily."

An air force officer

recalled how, around the same period, he returned to his naval air station in the U.S. after leave to discover half his squadron of aircraft being repainted with Israeli markings. "We only had 50 per cent of our squadron left — I was flabbergasted," he said. "I wasn't consulted. I was told 'they've got to go to Israel — we're out of business for a while'." Many serving U.S. officers suspect that Israel received large amounts of surplus U.S. weaponry after the 1991 Gulf war — as a quid pro quo for staying out of the conflict when Saddam fired missiles at Tel Aviv. Officials who served on the State Department's Defence Security Assistance Agency — ultimately responsible for transfers to Israel — deny this and General Gus Pagonis, who was the head of U.S. military logistics during the war against Iraq, insisted to us that "everything we took off the ships (in Saudi Arabia) I put back aboard them en route to America."

However, General Pagonis — now head of logistics for the Sears Roebuck chain of department stores — added: "I don't know if the ships stopped anywhere on the way." A former Marine officer said that he believed a ship carrying U.S. Hellfire missiles may have been routed to the U.S. via the Israeli port of Haifa, unloading part of its cargo on the munitions pier as part of an "in theatre" transfer of weapons to America's closest ally in the Middle East. Other retired officers asked what happened to dozens of U.S. Army and Marine Stinger missiles that were officially listed as "missing" in the Gulf in 1991. The Defence Department's inspector

general inventoried 60 per cent of the Stinger armoury and found that 188 of the missiles had disappeared. In the same year, the U.S. military's General Accounting Office found that 2,185 missiles — Stingers, Dragons and Redeyes — were apparently missing from 11 U.S. European weapons storage sites. Where did they go?

In all, the U.S. Marines are recorded as having fired 159 Hellfire air-to-ground missiles during the 1991 conflict with Iraq — almost

the same number of missiles the Israelis fired in just three weeks in southern Lebanon last year, along with at least 2,600 shells. Another U.S. Gulf veteran recalled seeing "miles and miles of truck containers on the Tapline road in Saudi Arabia (which follows the Trans Arabia Pipeline), loaded with shells and missiles — I know we did make transfers at about that time, including to coalition allies. We transferred some missiles that were, as we say, 'beginning to get to the end of their freshness'." In fact, former U.S. and serving air force personnel say that a number of Martin Marietta Hellfire missiles manufactured in the late 1980s and apparently taken to the Gulf were malfunctioning, hitting vehicles but failing to explode on impact — just as one of the Hellfires (dated 1988) failed to explode against the ambulance in southern Lebanon. Other Hellfires failed to explode in Lebanon during this period and were later found by Hizbollah guerrillas who loaded them onto trucks. They were presumably sent to Iran for examination.

"An awful lot of shells are transferred to Israel and nobody knows a hell of a lot about it," a U.S. defence analyst remarked on the day Israel put its latest request for 98,000 artillery shells to the U.S. this month. "The military here is down-sizing and wants to get rid of some ordnance because it's old. But an equal amount of good material just leaves our stocks for Israel without a by-your-leave. It goes through the legal channels but no one reports it, no one questions it, no one asks where it's used or how it's used. And if it kills innocent folk, do you think the Clinton administration is going to make a song and dance about it? They'll say that criticising Israel may 'damage the peace process'. Every assurance

has been given to Israel that it will not be touched." Arms transfers to Israel have to undergo a period of 30 days' formal notice. Major defence equipment with a value of more than \$14m requires congressional notification — amounts of less than \$14m do not. "Anyone on the Hill knows that challenging any transfers to Israel is not going to help their political career," a former army colonel commented. "The Israeli lobby is very, very powerful. It's not going to be criticised." In fact, after it used U.S. Navy anti-tank cluster bombs on civilian areas of west Beirut in 1982, Israel was taken to task in Washington. President Reagan briefly held up deliveries from Dover Air Force Base of U.S. F-15 and F-16 fighter-bombers to Israel while congressional hearings investigated the use of the cluster bombs. But even when classified material was edited out of the final report of the hearings, the State Department refused to publish the full findings on the grounds that the entire sessions were "classified."

Indeed, "classified" is a word that occurs fairly often when you ask about weapons transfers to Israel. The congressional branch of the National Archives contains numerous references to classified, "legally approved transfers" to Israel. But they are not open to public inspection. Nor was anyone in Washington able to explain last week what Israel needs 98,000 new shells for. Surely not to fire at Egypt or Jordan, its partners in peace. At West Bank towns in the event of a second, armed intifada, perhaps? Or into Lebanon this hot, dangerous summer?

The Independent

Sharansky says Israel to facilitate movement of goods to West Bank

(Continued from page 1)

During his tour in Al Hassan Industrial City in Irbid, the Israeli minister visited joint Israeli-Jordanian textile ventures and said that both sides want to make efforts to ensure the success of these ventures.

Jordanian and Israeli figures indicate that there are about 14 joint ventures, worth about \$20 million, between businessmen from the two countries, mainly in the textile sector. Most of the products are being sent to Israel to be re-exported under Israeli labels.

"In the field of joint investment, there is a chance that Jordanian made products can be exported to the U.S. under the umbrella of free trade

between Israel and the U.S. We hope that what we have signed [today] will enable Al Hassan Industrial City to achieve the same privilege with the U.S.," Dr. Mulki said.

He said both sides are evaluating the progress made regarding the trade agreement and identifying areas for improvement adding that, during his talks with his Israeli counterpart, the two sides agreed to form "a committee to study the areas of improvement and to make the proper suggestions for these improvements, so that we can improve the trade flow between Jordan and Israel."

"We discussed the matter of standards and we hope to reach an understanding on

this issue because this is one of the most important barriers that impede trade between the two sides," Dr. Mulki said.

Following his meeting with the Israeli minister, Dr. Anani said that he did not discuss Israeli security measures that hinder the movement of goods into Israel and the PNA areas with the Israeli minister.

"We were in full agreement that there must be joint efforts exerted in the very near future in order to encourage the flow of goods between us and the Palestinian territories and to attenuate the trilateral nature and the interdependence of trade flow among the three different parties," Dr. Anani said.

Mr. Sharansky, who heads

the Yisrael Ba-Aliya party which maintains seven seats in the 120-seat Israeli Knesset, welcomed a proposed meeting between Palestinian President Yasser Arafat and the hardline Israeli Infrastructure Minister Ariel Sharon. Several members of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's coalition said that a meeting between Mr. Sharon and Mr. Arafat's right arm Mahmoud Abbas should be followed by another meeting with the Palestinian president.

"I think our government and every minister is open to conduct meetings. I can only welcome this meeting and I believe that we have no other way but to talk, to sit together and to look for solutions," Mr. Sharansky said.

Central Bank liberalises foreign exchange dealings

(Continued from page 1)

Rajae Salfiti, deputy general manager of the Union Bank for Savings and Investment, said the control anywhere in the world, are hindrances to advancement and progress. As such, he pointed out, the full liberalisation will carry Jordan to the level of advanced and true free-

market countries. Noting that Jordan has begun liberalising prices of foodstuffs and reforming subsidy policies, Mr. Salfiti saw liberalisation continuing in a different sector though.

Mr. Salfiti said Jordan will now be among the countries that are wide open for investments but he did not expect invest-

ments to start flowing overnight.

"It's just that investors would be more at comfort to note in their studies that they invest and take out their returns freely without delays," he indicated.

Mr. Salfiti rejected talk of an expected large outflow of funds from the country after the CBI decision.

"There were so many ways to get money out of the country. I don't think anyone who wanted to do that was waiting for the liberalisation decision," he added.

Mr. Salfiti said the CBI decision will have a psychological effect on people to bring their savings to the Kingdom and not the other way around.

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Large Jordanian team travels to Geneva tomorrow for first formal negotiations with WTO

By Ghaila Alul
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — A 16-member delegation leaves for Geneva on Tuesday to launch the first formal round of negotiations between Jordan and the World Trade Organisation (WTO).

An inaugural round of negotiations was launched in October when Jordan submitted a detailed memorandum to WTO members describing the country's economic situation with special emphasis on trade, according to Tamam Ghoul, the director of the coordination office of negotiations with the WTO.

Ms. Ghoul told the Jordan Times Sunday that following the October round, Jordan responded to questions raised by WTO members about the country's economy.

It is expected that at the upcoming round of negotiations, Jordan will be asked to elaborate and support those answers, said Ms. Ghoul.

As a WTO member, Jordan will have to abide by certain conditions binding to all members. These

include forms of non-discrimination clauses: the "most favoured nation" (MFN) and the "national treatment" clause.

According to a WTO booklet, the MFN condition commits all members to grant products of other members treatment no less favourable than that accorded to the products of any other country. Thus, no country is to give special trading advantages to another or to discriminate against it. All are on an equal basis and all share the benefits of any moves toward lower trade barriers.

It adds that the most favoured nation treatment generally ensures that developing countries and others with little economic leverage are able to benefit freely from the best trading conditions wherever and whenever they are negotiated.

Ms. Ghoul explained that the "national treatment" clause commits all members to treat incoming goods no less favourably than the equivalent locally-produced goods.

Jordan will also have to abide by a tariff binding

condition which commits members to observe their tariffs and not raise them in the future, Ms. Ghoul added.

According to the booklet, binding means that a tariff level for a particular product becomes a commitment by a WTO member and cannot be increased without compensation negotiations with its main trading partners. Bilateral negotiations with WTO members will come at a later stage, said Ms. Ghoul adding that during the course of negotiations, Jordan will "submit enough evidence to convince the members that it needs a transitional period to implement WTO rules."

Jordan is one of 28 countries currently negotiating to join the organisation's 131 members.

The Arab countries which have already joined the WTO are, Kuwait, Qatar, Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia, Mauritania, the United Arab Emirates, Djibouti and Bahrain.

The Arab countries which are currently negotiating to join the organisation are Jordan, Algeria, Oman, Saudi Arabia and Sudan.

Britain boosts exports to Arab states

DUBAI (AFP) — British exports to Arab Gulf states jumped 26 per cent last year to 5.2 billion pounds (\$8.4 billion), boosted by arms sales and energy industry contracts, British economic sources have said.

Britain, which ranks close to Japan and the United States as the top exporters to the oil-rich region, hopes for another buoyant year in 1997 as firmer oil prices bolster Gulf economies, the sources said.

The biggest gains were recorded in Saudi Arabia, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates, while modest rises were registered in Kuwait and Bahrain but exports to Oman fell slightly, according to British Department of Trade and Industry figures.

Britain exported 2.48 billion pounds (\$4.21 billion) of goods to Saudi Arabia last year, up 31 per cent from 1995.

A British embassy commercial expert in Riyadh said the increase was mainly because of more deliveries of military equipment to the kingdom under the mammoth Yamama defence contract signed in 1986.

But there were also increases in exports of automobiles as well as telecommunications and electrical equipment, he said.

New companies law regulates registration, exemptions of foreign, regional entities

This is the second of a two-part article on the main amendments to the companies law. The first part appeared Tuesday, June 24, 1997.

By Samir Ghawi
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The new companies law, which became effective June 15, 1997, has rectified the gaps that emerged from the practical implementation of the previous 1989 law and regulated other organisational articles.

In this regard, the regulations relating to the merger of companies and specifying the bases and legal frameworks were adjusted. In addition, the legal questions that are associated with mergers and the protection of shareholders' rights as well as other parties were also addressed.

The new law regulated the process of converting public institutions into

commercial companies, in which the private sector would participate, and the change from one type of company to another.

According to Companies Comptroller Loay Mismar, the new law includes provisions that are in harmony with other economic laws, such as the Securities Law, in terms of disclosures, clarity and transparency.

As to foreign companies operating in the Kingdom or non-operating regional offices, the new law has included articles to organise the registration process and acquire exemptions.

At the same time, the new law deals with the economic situation in such a way so as to encourage investments and be compatible with the economic openness being witnessed in the region.

The amendments allow a person to register a company that would wholly be his/her own just like a sole proprietorship except that

is a limited liability entity. This person would be obliged by the provisions of the limited liability company in terms of following meeting procedures, management and raising or lowering the capital.

"Such a modification would permit individuals to invest and operate without jeopardising their private property," Mr. Mismar said.

He added that these individuals do not have to resort to other people's money to invest in the project.

He said this was the practice earlier when one person owned 99.99 per cent of a company with his/her son, wife/husband or friend owning less than one per cent of the shares.

Mr. Mismar said the new law facilitates the registration procedures as it allows the lawyer who formulates the articles of association to obtain the signatures of the founders

and the certifying documents and submit them to the comptroller of companies.

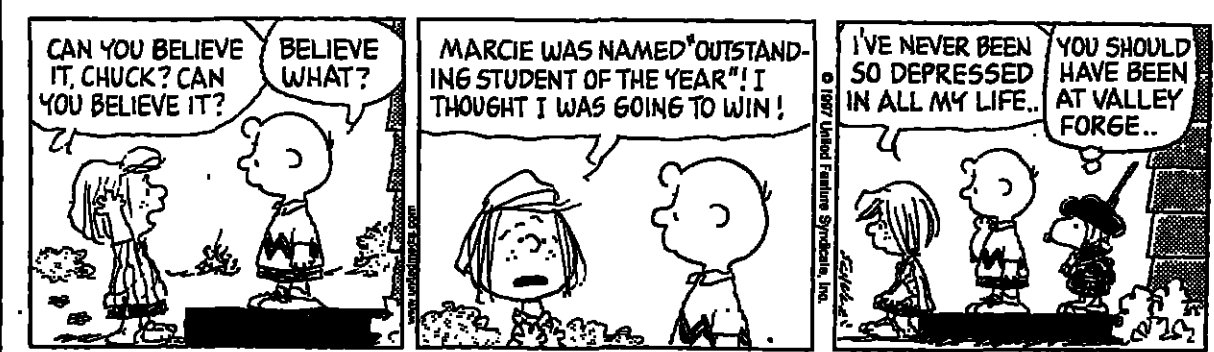
"This will expedite the registration process," the comptroller stressed.

The founders of a company are allowed under the amendments to adopt the prices they see appropriate to estimate the value of fixed assets. If they disagree on an estimate then the founders would not enter into forming a company.

Furthermore, the new law allows the comptroller the right to verify the estimate if he had any doubts about it.

Mr. Mismar indicated that the amendments allow a person with a certain idea or an invention right to register a company and start operation. Such a person can later reap the results of his/her work by offering it to investors in accordance with the securities law.

Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt'n' Jeff



REUTERS

REUTERS

The Business of Information

Major Currencies & Cross Rates									
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	CAD	ITL	NLG	FRF
US Dollar	-	1.7418	0.6013	1.4850	114.85	1.3820	1700.00	1.9388	5.8670
DE Mark	0.5742	-	0.3448	0.8354	65.94	0.7931	975.81	1.1247	3.3683
GB Sterling	1.6630	2.8930	-	2.4081	190.45	2.2863	2827.10	3.2575	9.7568
CH Franc	0.6873	119.81	0.4127	-	78.92	0.9482	1167.58	134.88	4.0295
JP Yen	0.0087	1.5150	0.5228	1.2658	-	1.2023	14.79	170.40	5.1040
CA Dollar	0.7236	1.2353	0.4304	1.0310	1.20	-	1205.88	1.3900	4.1675
IT Lira	0.0006	1.0241	0.3534	0.0856	1481.92	0.8127	-	11.52	3.4502
NL Guilder	0.5105	88.86	0.3088	74.27	58.59	0.7052	867.44	-	2.9937
FR Franc	0.1704	0.2967	0.1024	24.7913	19.56	0.2355	33.38	33.3800	-

Middle Eastern Currencies									
Currency	USD	JOD	SAR	IRAN	QAT	KUW	AED	LBP	EGP
US Dollar	-	0.7080	3.7504	0.3770	3.6398	0.3022	3.6729	1535.50	3.3830
Jordan Dinar	1.4124	-	5.2972	0.5324	5.1410	0.4268	5.1877	2168.79	4.7324
GB Sterling	0.2868	0.1888	-	0.1005	0.97	0.0806	0.98	409.42	0.9047
Bahrain Dinar	2.65	1.9781	9.9488	-	9.86	0.8018	9.74	4073.27	9.0007
Qatar Dinar	0.2747	0.1945	1.0304	1.0304	-	0.0830	1.01	421.86	0.9322
Kuwait Dinar	3.3096	2.3432	12.4124	1.2476	12.05	-	12.16	5081.91	0.9322
Emirates Dinar	0.2723	1.0211	1.0211	0.0910	0.0823	-	-	418.06	0.9238
Lebanese/1000	0.65	0.4611	2.4425	0.2455	2.3704	0.1968	2.3920	-	2.2097
Egyptian	0.2947	0.2067	1.1053	0.1111	1.0727	0.0891	1.0825	452.55	-

Energy		
Oils	Last	Previous
Brent	18.46	18.06
W. Texas	18.39	18.82
Bonny	18.46	18.06
Dubai	17.00	16.67
UL Gas	178.00	178.00

Mid-East Currencies					
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY
SA Riyal	0.2668	0.4646	0.16034	0.38823	30.8504
AE Dirham	0.2723	0.47443	0.16372	0.39642	31.2969
YD Dinar	3.3096	5.76701	1.39005	4.81928	380.373
BH Dinar	0.3770	4.82321	1.58515	3.8825	304.971
CY Pound	1.9347	3.3693	1.1627	2.815	222.2

Metal Prices		
Metal	Bid	Offer
Gold (oz's)	335	335.5
Silver (oz's)	4.71	4.73
Platinum (oz's)	419	422
AL (3 Months)	1673	1676
CU (3 Months)	2416	2421
Zinc (3 Months)	1433	1438
Lead (3 Months)	626	629
NI (3 Months)	6860	6890

Currency Deposit Rates (Bid)					
Currency	1 Month	3 Months	6 Months	1 Year	2 Year
USD	5.51	5.59	5.50	5.50	6.00
GBP	6.48	6.84	7.06	7.03	7.06
JPY	0.44	0.48	0.51	0.57	0.68
DEM	3.25	3.00	3.08	3.10	3.12
FRF	3.23	3.27	3.31	3.30	3.41
CHF	1.19	1.30	1.21	1.31	1.31
ITL	6.77	6.72	6.66	6.48	6.37

Main Equity Indices						
Source	Index	Value	Chg	% Chng	High	Low
New York	DOW JONES	7887.72	33.47	0.44	7770.73	7853.79
New York	S&P 500	887.3	3.62	0.41	884.7	883.68
London	FT-SE 100	4640.3	-17.6	-0.38	4652	4623.1
Tokyo	NIKKEI 225	20523.78	-101.01	-0.49	20742.7	20523.8
Paris	CAC 40	2891.54	-2.6	-0.09	2903.18	2883.64
Frankfurt	DAX	3795.41	-8.88	-0.26	3811.44	3785.36

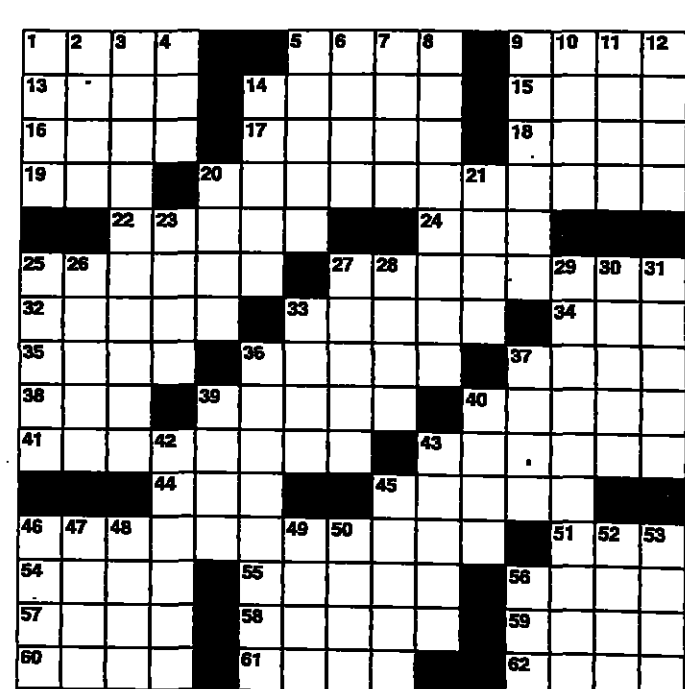
Energy		
Commodity	Last	Delivery
Coffee (c/lbs)	185.67	Spot
Cocoa (\$/ton)	1898	Spot
Sugar (\$/ton)	326.5	Spot
Wheat (\$/ton)	140	Spot
Soya (c/lbs)	22.2	Spot
Tea (stg/kg)	138	Spot
Barley (\$/bsh)	0	Spot
Rice (\$/ton)	480	Spot

JOD Cross Rates			
Currency	Buy	Sell	Rate
US Dollar	0.708	0.710	-
GB Sterling	1.1761	1.182	-
DE Mark	0.4088	0.4088	-
CH Franc	0.4489	0.4483	-
FR Franc	0.1205	0.1211	-
JP Yen	0.6189	0.62	-
NL Guilder	0.3614	0.3632	-
IT Lira	0.4161	0.4162	-

* Source: Central Bank of Jordan.

THE Daily Crossword

- ACROSS
- Pacific island country
 - Make sound
 - Lie in the sun
 - about (approximately)
 - Alabama city
 - Rose's fellow
 - Dull pain
 - Troy
 - Magic charm
 - Supply with a crew
 - Ventriloquist of old
 - Singer Reese
 - Exist
 - Wrinkle
 - Canning vessel
 - Washer cycle
 - Suspends movement
 - Ripen
 - Roof overhang
 - Indian craft
 - Field measure
 - Had a meal
 - Bridge
 - forerunner
 - Inquired
 - Wedlock
 - Steps for crossing a fence
 - Doctrine
 - Office worker, for short
 - Long jump medalist, 1960
 - Unused
 - Author Ludwig
 - Modern message
 - Wood dressing tool
 - Dreadful
 - Firearm
 - Tender
 - Heavy load carrier
 - Let stand
 - Easy task



by Matthew Higgins

Monday's Puzzle solved:

ITEM	ABBA	ASSET
RARA	FURL	WHALE
ALIT	TRIG	ARGOT
LETTER	MAN	STON
EEER	OHM	
SCORN	SILO	PROC
ARMOUR	REDD	OPA
WINFREY	GLASSES	
ELI	EVEN	EMPIRE
DEAL	OWED	AREAS
ELK	RAGI	
RATHER	MOMETER	
MANTA	EAVE	ZEAL
OGEE	AMEN	ERGO
TETRA	PART	RYAN

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- DOWN
- Suds
 - Peruvian
 - "Annie's Song" singer
 - Wrath
 - Wyeth's secret subject
 - Lamb
 - Asian river
 - Castigate
 - Unproductive
 - "As snug as..."
 - die
 - Enthusiastic
 - Move furtively
 - Other
 - Son of
 - Aphrodite
 - Alleviate
 - The — of the crop
 - Rodeo rope
 - Clergyman's home
 - Thanks —
 - "Call of the Wild" author
 - See eye to eye
 - Hollow stems
 - WWI field
 - Judge's office
 - R — Roer
 - Longing
 - "o'clock scholar"
 - Believe him or not
 - Filched
 - Wading bird
 - Fox
 - Moslem prince
 - Neapolitan cash
 - Leave out
 - Place for valuables
 - Pound
 - Lament
 - Burn

HOROSCOPE FORECAST FOR MONDAY, JUNE 30, 1997

By Thomas S. Pierson,
Astrologer, Carroll
Righter Foundation

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) You can at this time add to your income and take care of property repairs, so long as they are not too costly. Don't disagree with a trusted advisor. Set up a budget and stay within it so that you won't be short of funds.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) If you labour on improving your feeling of security today, you will be much happier. Get out socially later this evening and you can shake off the discouraging mood you're in and make a good impression towards others.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Listen only to advice from people you know you can trust today, new contacts will steer you wrong. Be careful in notion, especially while on the highway, thereby eliminating any potential difficulties you could encounter.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Your mate could have some strange ideas today which should not be taken seriously; use your common sense in dealing with business matters and thereby you will notice that your endeavours will become successful.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) You should not allow a fellow business associate waste your time today or prevent you from starting a new project which you know will become successful. Handle credit and career matters intelligently.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Pay special attention today to the details of anything you are involved in, or you'll regret it in the days ahead. Be sure you get plenty of rest this evening, since the days ahead will be quite demanding on your nerves.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Don't begin any new recreation today which will upset your mate or you could notice a difficult situation developing. Show that you are devoted, and find something which you can enjoy together at home.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) You can at last reach an agreement today with a fellow associate and solve a mutual difficulty. Don't let a home concern disrupt your routine at this time or you could notice that there would be hostility there.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Get your workload cleared up early today, superiors will be impressed with your efficiency. You should not allow a friend to distract you from this or your won't gain the success which you are seeking.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) You can have a fine time with your mate today, however, don't be extravagant or you'll regret it in the days ahead. Simple pleasure are still the best, and they should be treasured for what can be provided.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) If you're going to be away for sometime, make sure the home situation concerning your loved ones is harmonious before you leave. Be more thoughtful to your loved ones in the days ahead so that harmony can exist.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Giving unrequested information to others today will not gain their favour or help you to get ahead. Be more brief and to-the-point or otherwise you could lose their attention, and the just of the conversation will disappear.

Birthstone of June: Pearl — Moon Stone

Oil and gas exploration costs rocket in Gulf

DUBAI (R) — The increasing cost and scarcity of oil drilling rigs available for work in Saudi Arabia and neighbouring Gulf states could hamper plans to accelerate exploration and development activity in the region, drilling contractors and energy firms in the region have said.

A worldwide rig shortage and stepped up exploration and development activity following last year's oil price rally have pushed daily drilling rates in the Gulf to their highest level for 15 years, they said.

"There is not a rig readily available in Saudi Arabia. Trying to find one is next to impossible. It's a mad scramble right now," said a Western manager at one of the largest drilling contractors in Saudi Arabia.

International firms and state-owned oil companies aiming to tap the Gulf's massive oil and gas reserves have watched closely since rates have doubled in less than 18 months and availability of rigs has shrunk.

Basic, light-duty land rigs capable of reaching down 10,000 feet were quoted at

a daily rate of \$15,000-\$18,000 while the rate for a higher powered rig able to drill down 30,000 feet could secure up to \$25,000 a day, companies said.

Offshore rigs, depending on the length of contract and the well programme, were commanding \$40-\$65,000 a day, they said.

The tightness seen in rig markets from the North Sea to the Gulf of Mexico and Asia was exacerbated in the Gulf since many of the rigs surplus to capacity when the market went into downturn in 1982 and 1986 had been converted into accommodation or early production platforms or simply cannibalised.

Rigs with special features, such as top-drives which can speed up and so reduce costs of well drilling programmes, were also hard to secure without paying a heavy price premium, contractors and suppliers said.

High rates were compelling firms to cooperate more closely in their drilling programmes and leading companies to sign long-term rig contracts for cover up to

eight years.

"Basically all the rigs have been booked. You have to look far outside the Gulf for supply," said another contractor based in Saudi Arabia, the world's largest oil producer and exporter.

The tightness has been evident in recent months when Oman's main oil operator Petroleum Development Oman (PDO) decided to fly in a 60-tonne workover rig from Alaska on a giant Antonov cargo plane because of the lack of supply alternatives.

One company aiming to spud wells offshore oil-rich United Arab Emirates is still waiting for availability six months after it first planned to start drilling, company sources said.

Drilling and development work is a key plank in Gulf states' plans to lift oil capacity to meet growing global demand in the next decade and to exploit their largely untapped gas reserves to fuel expanding domestic industry and gas-export projects. Foreign oil firms, lured by higher oil

prices and by Gulf governments eager to attract foreign capital, have committed themselves particularly to programmes in Qatar, Yemen and Oman.

Just in tiny Qatar, two U.S. firms — Pennzoil Co. and Atlantic Richfield Co (ARCO) — along with the State Qatar General Petroleum Corp are currently tendering to hire rigs that are part of the country's plans to lift oil and condensate capacity by 50 per cent by the year 2000.

Saudi Arabia is banking on higher gas supplies to diversify its oil-dependent economy by fuelling industrialisation and expanding the country's petrochemical sector.

It is also drilling to develop its remote Shaybah oilfield to guarantee its unrivalled production capacity in the next decade.

United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Kuwait, Oman and Yemen are also ratcheting up drilling activity to bring on new flows to meet the demands of growing populations and energy export markets.

UAE to enforce private sector pensions soon

DUBAI (R) — United Arab Emirates Labour and Social Affairs Minister Matar Humaid Al Tayar said a law forcing private companies to pay pensions to employees would come into effect soon.

"The cabinet has recently instructed the ministry of finance to study the law and enforce it. This law would make it mandatory for all private companies to pay social security for its employees," he was quoted by the Khaleej Times as saying.

He said this would encourage UAE nationals to work in the private sector as UAE laws currently require that only public sector employees be paid

pensions.

Mr. Tayar was also quoted by newspapers as saying the ministry would not set a quota for employing UAE nationals in the private sector but it would nominate unemployed UAE nationals to posts offered by private firms.

Asked by the Khaleej Times if the ministry would set a law forcing private firms to employ UAE nationals, Tayar said: "I will not encourage this myself."

However, he said the ministry would check its database of unemployed UAE nationals when it studies employment visa applications from companies for foreign workers.

Gazan company exports retreaded tyres to Israel

GAZA (R) — Palestinians once burnt old tyres to protest against Israeli occupation but one Palestinian company is now refurbishing them for export to the Jewish state.

The Nabaheen Industry and Trading Company, which runs the Matin Global for Tyres Factory for retreading entire tyres in self-ruled Gaza, is the only company of its kind in either the Palestinian areas or in Israel.

Set up last year, the factory exported its first shipment of 300 retreaded tyres to Israel last week.

"This is the first time we have exported to Israel," said the company's owner Jaber Nabaheen. "So far we have been selling only in the Gaza Strip and in the West Bank."

The westernised Nabaheen, 54, worked for a United Nations agency in Vienna. Last year he built his small factory on three acres (1.4 hectares) of land near his home in the central Gaza Strip with capital of \$1.5 million.

Both the house and the factory sit like an island in a sea of greenery. They are the only buildings surrounded by vast areas of cultivated land in the PLO-ruled Gaza Strip, only a few kilometres away from the border with Israel.

Mr. Nabaheen obtained a \$650,000 loan from the World Bank to expand his project and set up a branch in the West Bank.

Salem Rohana, investment officer at the International Fund Corporation, a branch of the World Bank that offers loans to the private sector, said: "Nabaheen's idea is new and when we gave him the loan, we believed it could be a success in the Palestinian market."

He said the factory had passed all Israeli standard tests and was given a permit to market its product in Israel.

Foreign-trained workforce inside the clean factory, 19 Palestinians were working on sophisticated machinery imported from the United States, Italy and

Portugal.

Mr. Nabaheen had experts from those countries train Palestinian workers on the machinery. Raw materials are all imported from Portugal.

The word Matin, the factory's name, is Arabic for "strong".

Mr. Nabaheen's factory remanufactures 4,000 car tyres and 800 large tyres for buses and trucks monthly with a six-month guarantee.

"There was a need for having a branch in the West Bank because the demand there is greater and because Israel made movement almost impossible by imposing the almost continuous closures on the Gaza Strip. Closures have also raised the cost of transportation," Mr. Nabaheen told Reuters.

Israel sealed off PLO-ruled areas following suicide attacks by militants that killed scores of people after the 1993 signing of the PLO-Israel peace deals.

Palestinians complain the closures have led to a deterioration of their ailing

economy and discouraged badly needed foreign and Arab investment.

While under occupation, Palestinians complained that Israel did not improve infrastructure in Palestinian areas. Roads in those areas were so bad they damaged new cars in little time.

Mr. Nabaheen said there is a big price advantage in buying retreaded tyres.

"Twenty years ago, Israel used to renew only the tyres' outer layers, but we retread the whole tyre. Practically we remanufacture the old tyres and our factory is the first of its kind in Palestine and in Israel."

"The price of a retread tyre is 35 per cent and sometimes 60 per cent lower than the price of the cheapest new tyre," he said.

The old tyres are bought from Israel through Israeli agents.

"The old tyre goes through several remanufacturing stages, and when it is finished, it's as good as new," Mr. Nabaheen said.

Kuwait, India complete study on refinery venture

KUWAIT CITY (AFP) — Kuwaiti and Indian investors have completed a feasibility study, now awaiting final approval, for a \$2.6 billion refinery to be built in India, an official said here.

State-owned Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) and Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) each plan to take a 26 per cent stake, said Ahmad Al Duaij, executive assistant managing

director for KPC's overseas projects development.

The remaining 48 per cent of equity for the refinery, to be built in the southeast Indian state of Orissa, will be raised through an initial public offering, Mr. Duaij told AFP.

The project is worth about \$2.6 billion, including financing costs, with 33 per cent to be raised through equity and the remainder covered by debt financing.

he said.

"The feasibility has been concluded," Mr. Duaij said of the refinery that is planned to process some 184,000 barrels per day (bpd) of oil, lower than an original target of 256,000 bpd.

The boards of KPC and IOC are now evaluating the detailed report before giving their final approval for the plant which could be operating in 2001 or 2002, he added.

The project is part of KPC's strategy to establish refining capacity in Asia for Kuwaiti crude of some 400,000 bpd by 2000.

Mr. Duaij said plans by KPC to invest in a second refinery project at Cochin in India have been dropped after the Indian government said the refinery, which was to have capacity of 120,000 bpd or more, should be used for export.

"If we need export-oriented refineries we will build them in Kuwait," Mr. Duaij said, but added, "we are looking at other possibilities in India."

Kuwait produces two million bpd of oil in line with a quota set by the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC).

JORDAN FINANCIAL MARKET													
HOUSING BANK CENTER AMMAN - SUBSIDIARY													
TELEPHONE: 57117 / 507179													
ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR SUNDAY 29/06/1997													
PAST 12 MONTHS	COMPANY'S NAME	P / E	DIV.	NO. OF	NO. OF	NO. OF	NO. OF	NO. OF	NO. OF	NO. OF	NO. OF	NO. OF	NO. OF
YTD	YTD	YTD	YTD	YTD	YTD	YTD	YTD	YTD	YTD	YTD	YTD	YTD	YTD
269.000	213.000	ARAB BANK	11.7	1.57	10	220	56030	258.00	254.00	4.00			
2.340	1.680	JOR. NATIONAL BK.	8	0.00	34	19427	40836	2.11	2.10	-0.01			
5.600	4.100	CASH AMMAN BANK	11.3	2.75	2	650	3543	5.60	5.45	-0.15			
1.600	1.100	BANK OF JORDAN	6.9	0.00	4	650	2129	3.29	3.30	0.01			
1.210	0.880	MID. EAST TRV. BK.	61.1	0.00	6	6450	6003	0.99	0.93	-0.06			
2.480	2.120	INDUSTRIAL DEV. BK.	15.1	3.85	37	16867	83951	4.87	5.04	-0.17			
8.200	4.900	THE HOUSING BK.	16.4	0.00	9	803900	2014720	3.97	3.77	-0.20			
4.180	2.440	JOR. KOWATY BANK	13.4	0.00	9	803900	2014720	3.97	3.77	-0.20			
1.050	0.780	JOR. KOWATY BANK	13.4	0.00	9	803900	2014720	3.97	3.77	-0.20			
4.050	3.480	JOR. ISLAMIC BANK	14.6	3.33	7	1890	6094	3.64	3.60	-0.04			
2.640	1.000	BETT. AL-MAL (BEITRA)	7	13.27	1	250	283	1.17	1.13	-0.04			
1.440	1.010	PHILADEL. INV. BK.	9	0.00	5	778	801	1.05	1.03	-0.02			
BANK SECTOR TOTALS													
INDEX: 196.38		INDEX: -1.07		137	572944	2233710							
4.550	3.800	JERUSALEM INSUR.	10.5	5.19	2	50020	192577	3.80	3.85	0.05			
3.010	2.210	JORDAN GULF INSUR.	9	0.00	1	100	210	2.21	2.10	-0.11			
INSURANCE SECTOR TOTALS													
INDEX: 111.60		INDEX: -0.16		3	50120	192787							
1.820	1.460	JOR. ELECTRICITY PWR.	7.9	6.10	15	4994	8218	1.65	1.64	-0.01			
2.780	2.340	EXIMB MINERALS	12.9	6.12	1	500	1275	2.65	2.55	-0.10			
1.380	0.930	RAIL. PORTFOLIO	9	0.00	19	9800	12384	1.27	1.26	-0.01			
1.030	0.820	RAIL. PORTFOLIO	12.1	6.90	1	100	100	1.00	1.00	0.00			
0.810	0.480	JORDAN TRV. TRAD.	25.7	0.00	1	1950	778	0.51	0.50	-0.01			
1.910	1.170	MID. EAST HOTELS	20.4	0.00	3	250	331	1.32	1.34	0.02			
3.720	2.890	JOR. KOWATY INV. EDUC.	7.6	0.00	8	1800	4100	2.98	2.98	0.00			
1.220	0.960	SARSA EDUCATION	9	0.00	14	9350	8914	0.97	0.95	-0.02			
2.230	1.630	UNITED CO.	8.0	6.51	12	13900	23496	1.70	1.69	-0.01			
1.010	0.640	UNION LAND DEV.	9	0.00	2	250	175	0.69	0.71	0.02			
SERVICE SECTOR TOTALS													
INDEX: 108.53		INDEX: -0.57		76	42194	60037							
1.250	0.930	ATTAQUEH	9	0.00	1	2000	2060	1.03	1.03	0.00			
4.450	3.060	JOR. CEMENT FACT.	27.5	2.89	49	92759	379163	4.10	4.09	-0.01			
4.140	2.710	JOR. FERTILISER INDUS.	10.9	2.54	3	900	3546	3.95	3.94	-0.01			
7.050	4.950	ARAB POTASH CO.	15.5	3.00	2	650	4339	6.70	6.67	-0.03			
10.250	8.720	JOR. PETROL. REFINERY	9.8	9.07	6	12304	12054	9.90	9.80	-0.10			
1.470	1.050	WOOLLEN INDUSTRIES	10.8	8.00	3	5500	7125	3.27	3.26	-0.01			
3.260	2.450	INDUSTRIAL COM. AG.	9	0.00	1	600	1152	1.92	1.92	0.00			
7.150	6.400	JOR. WORTED MILLS	10.1	3.17	5	1100	7038	6.40	6.30	-0.10			
4.000	3.040	ARAB PHARM. MANF.	10.5	5.25	9	4050	15991	3.82	3.81	-0.01			
1.920	1.510	ARAB FOOD & MED.	17.0	5.84	2	750	1028	1.38	1.37	-0.01			
5.650	4.240	DAR ALDAMA DV. TRV.	13.6	4.50	4	2500	13875	5.64	5.55	-0.09			
3.850	2.760	ARAB ALUM. IND.	6.4	9.12	5	650	1779	2.76	2.74	-0.02			
960	450	LIVESTOCK & POULTRY	9.9	0.00	1	500	235	0.47	0.47	0.00			
1.820	1.000	NATIONAL STEEL IND.	9	0.00	2	740	735	1.00	0.98	-0.02			
780	520	NATIONAL STEEL IND.	9	0.00	4	2500	1325	0.54	0.54	0.00			
1.330	0.880	INTERMED. PETRO. CHEM.	9	0.00	12	7500	4350	0.58	0.58	0.00			
1.090	0.580	JOR. ROCKWELL INDUS.	9	0.00	1	500	280	0.58	0.56	-0.02			
4.390	3.430	ALADDIN IND.	25.8	2.60	3	550	2498	4.39	4.61	0.22			
1.670	1.120	JOR. SULPHUR CHEM.	17.5	5.11	15	4352	5962	1.36	1.37	0.01			
2.210	1.280	UNIV. MOD. INDUS.	9	0.00	16	3150	4001	1.28	1.27	-0.01			
1.520	1.110	JOR. WOOD. RESOURCES	15.1	8.93	5	950	1064	1.13	1.12	-0.01			
1.110	0.840	JOR. NEW CABLE CO.	13.2	0.00	12	6700	5578	0.85	0.83	-0.02			
2.090	1.440	AL -RAY READY WEAR	52.1	0.00	39	7552	11180	1.45	1.51	0.06			
1.130	0.800	SAV. ALUMINUM	6.0	0.00	43	34300	37197	1.13	1.09	-0.04			
1.260	0.860	UNION CR. & VEG.	39.6	0.00	2	450	394	0.87	0.87	0.00			
INDUSTRIAL SECTOR TOTALS													
INDEX: 127.70		INDEX: -0.47		259	195943	530996							
GRAND TOTAL		INDEX: 159.57		INDEX: -0.78		475	861201	3017530					
PARALLEL MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR SUNDAY 29/06/1997													
640	350	CENTRAL GEN. STORAGE	9	0.00	2	500	185	38	37	-0.01			
410	270	JOR. GRAIN FAC.	12.0	0.00	2	1750	786	46	45	-0.01			
840	660	UNION INV. SEC.	9	0.00	4	4800	765	67	67	0.00			
660	370	ARAB FIS. INVEST.	9	0.00	15	11302	8311	47	47	0.00			
950	580	UNION INV. SEC.	60.5	0.00	5	4400	1072	63	63	0.00			
510	200	JOR. INDUS. MACHS-JEMCO	9	0.00	2	1500	378	56	55	-0.01			
730	510	ARAB FOOD & MED.	9	0.00	5	1650	908	55	55	0.00			
490	210	UNION INV. SEC.	46.1	0.00	10	1000	400	41	40	-0.01			
750	400	NATL. MULT. ENG. KOWICO	0.00	0.00	36	34416	19875	58	58	0.00			
850	710	JORDAN STEEL	33.0	8.85	11	25100	19376	74	73	-0.01			
600	710	IND. ENG. 75%	9	0.00	1	150	86	61	62	0.01			
1.220	860	JORDAN TOBACCO 75%	9	0.00	5	2900	1054	80	80	0.00			
690	550	RAISI PHARM. 85%	9	0.00	2	248	104	58	58	0.00			
370	600	IND. ENG.	9	0.00	1	2598	995	37	37	0.00			
860	760	IND. CERAMIC	20.7	0.00	1	200	158	79	79	0.00			
1.000	800	NAT. ALUMINUM 75%	9	0.00	15	13250	7193	80	80	0.00			
870	530	MID. EAST COMPLEX	6.0	19.38	14	109550	72266	65	65	0.00			
GRAND TOTAL				130	214978	131136							
T : New 12 months high													
P : New 12 months low													
H : Listed during the past 12 months													
P/E ratio is 100 or more													
N : Negative P/E													
E : Earning is zero or N/A for the most recent year													

Tyson disqualified for biting Holyfield's ears

LAS VEGAS (R) — The Evander Holyfield-Mike Tyson rematch for the World Boxing Association heavy-weight title ended in a sensational style Saturday when Tyson was disqualified after three rounds for twice biting the champion's ears.

Holyfield was taken to the hospital following the bizarre turn of events and his trainer, Don Turner, said the champion was to undergo plastic surgery to reattach a section of the top of his right ear, which amazingly was recovered from the canvas after the shocking, aborted bout.

"I saw him bite his ear off," Turner said. "It was the most incredible thing that I've seen in all my years of boxing."

"I think (Tyson) should be suspended. I think he should be taken for some kind of (mental) evaluation. I think he should be fined a huge amount of money, maybe his whole purse."

The Nevada State Athletic Commission said it was withholding Tyson's \$30 million purse for the fight and would hold a meeting on July 1 to decide whether to fine him or take more serious action.

Holyfield's co-trainer, Tony Brooks, called for Tyson's boxing license. "They should take it away for life. It was nothing but desperation."

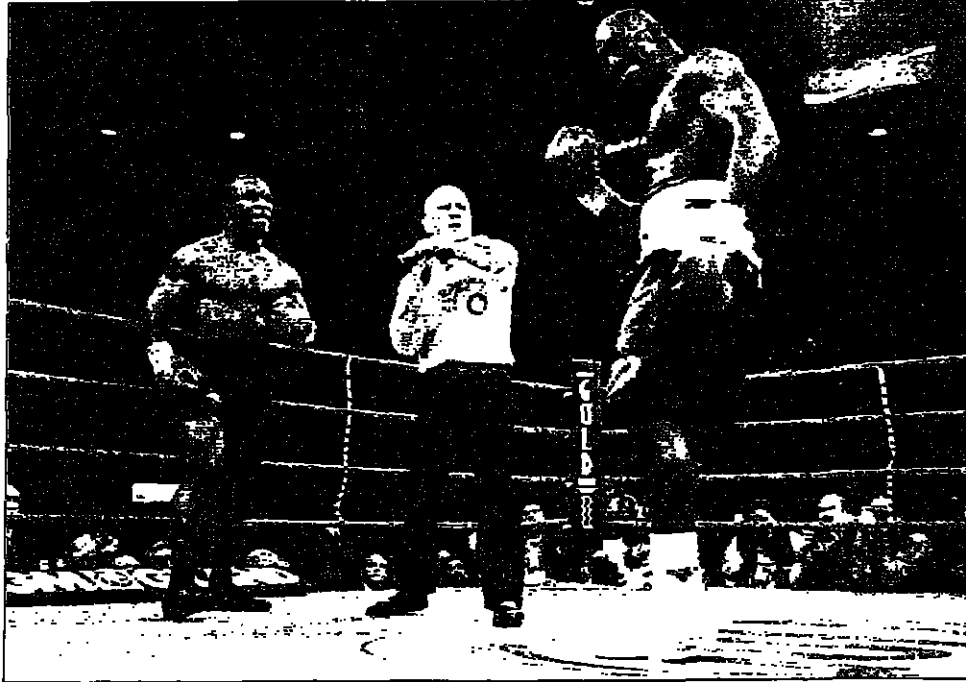
Added Turner: "It's a shame that things like this happen in boxing. I'm a guy that was a bad guy but I never did anything like that. That was very unprofessional. I'm just mystified by it."

"That was a bad thing that happened, that was a real bad thing," Turner said.

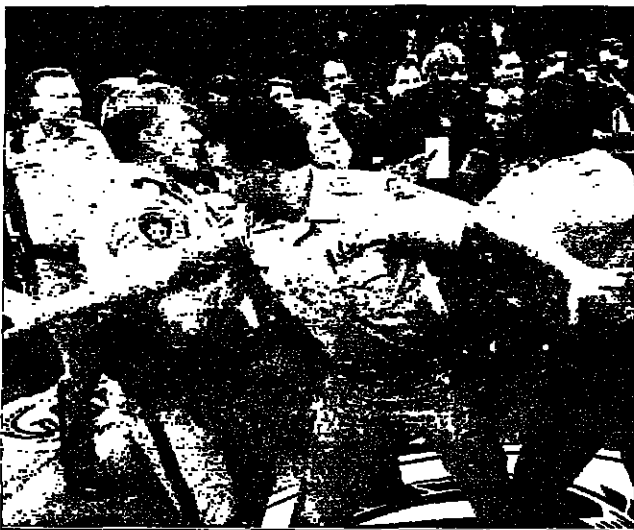
Following one of the most incredible and surrealistic sights in boxing history, a melee erupted in the ring after referee Mills Lane stopped the fight before the start of the fourth round.

Dozens of police officers and security guards poured into the ring to keep both sides apart as Tyson, who complained bitterly that he had been head-butted, had to be restrained from going after Holyfield's corner.

As both fighters later left the ring, Holyfield was



Referee Mills Lane signals timeout as WBA heavyweight champion Evander Holyfield (R) grimaces after challenger Mike Tyson bit a part of his ear off during the third round of their title fight. Holyfield retained his championship when Tyson was disqualified (Reuters photo)



Challenger Mike Tyson (R) takes a swing at a Las Vegas policeman during a melee in the ring following his title fight against WBA heavyweight champion Evander Holyfield (Reuters photo)

cheered, Tyson booed roundly.

After about 10 minutes, the official result was announced to a chorus of boos — Tyson was disqualified for biting Holyfield twice.

The trouble started in the second round when a cut opened up over Tyson's right eye following a clash of heads, which the referee ruled "an unintentional head butt."

"He butted me in first

round and then he butted me again in second round," complained an agitated Tyson after the fight.

"He kept going down and coming up ... And no one warned him or took any points from him. What am I to do? This is my career."

"I can't continue getting butted like that," Tyson said, pointing to gash over his right eye. "I got to retaliate."

And retaliate he did. Tyson, who had lost the

first two rounds, came out fighting mad in the third and hit Holyfield with several left hooks.

But with 33 seconds left in the round, the two came together and a furious Holyfield jumped away from a clinch in the middle of the ring howling in pain and clutching his right ear as he walked to his corner with blood pouring from the ear.

During the clinch Tyson, who must have gotten rid of his mouthpiece, ducked his head over and sank his teeth into Holyfield's right ear, actually tearing a piece off.

Tyson followed the retreating Holyfield and pushed him in the back before lane separated the fighters. A doctor examined Holyfield's wound and strangely declared he could box on.

The referee deducted two points from Tyson and warned him he would disqualify him if he bit Holyfield again. But when the pair next clashed at the end of the round, Tyson apparently used his teeth again, this time on the champion's left ear, according to Lane.

"The first bite you could actually see the teeth marks and the dent in the ear. The bite itself was cosmetically bad but the fight could go on," Lane explained.

"They got in another skirmish and I looked at Evander's ear and I could see another bite mark and I said that's it."

Holyfield, who thoroughly whipped Tyson in their first bout last November, stopping him in the 11th round, said Tyson knew he was going to lose again and took the coward's way out.

"It's an easy way to get out of the fight, to foul, cause you know you're going to get disqualified," said Holyfield before leaving for the hospital.

Although it appeared that Tyson completely lost his composure and went crazy in the ring, Turner also believed that the street-fighting move was more calculated.

"I don't think Tyson wanted to fight. This was his way out," Turner said.

"I told everybody that (Tyson) wasn't as good as everybody thought he was. Evander exploited him and here we are. Evander's in the hospital now."

Holyfield, who along with Muhammad Ali is the only three-time world heavyweight champion, earned at least \$30 million for the fight.

But he must be wondering if it was worth the mutilation.

Popov wins in return from stabbing

SANTA CLARA (AFP) — Russia's Alexander Popov won the 50-metre freestyle and 100m backstroke Saturday at the Santa Clara invitational, his first long-course event since being stabbed last August.

The reigning Olympic 50m and 100m freestyle champion won the events only 20 minutes apart, taking the 50 free in 22.78 seconds and the 100 backstroke in 56.92 seconds.

"I think I'm all right," Popov said. "I was not even shaved and I did pretty decent times, reasonably good I would say since I haven't been swimming long course since the Olympic games."

"I didn't expect something spectacular anyway."

Popov suffers no ill effects from the attack that left him in serious condition, having recovered mentally and physically far faster than tennis star Monica Seles after her stabbing.

"Psychologically I'm all right," he said. "I can walk in the

streets of Moscow again with no fear at all. There's no inconvenience with the scar."

Popov said his main goal this year is to win at the European championships and continue to improve on his times until the World Championships in Australia next January.

To help his world championship effort, Popov swam in two short-course meets in Australia last month.

"I think the fact I trained in Australia will give me a big advantage," he said. "American swimmers had an advantage in Atlanta and I will have an advantage there."

Popov had to rally to win the 50. Australia's Nathan Rickard was second in 23.19 seconds with American Neil Walker third at 23.27 seconds.

Spain's Martin Zubero was second in the backstroke at 56.99 with Walker third in 57.41 seconds.

Schumacher extends championship lead with GP win in France

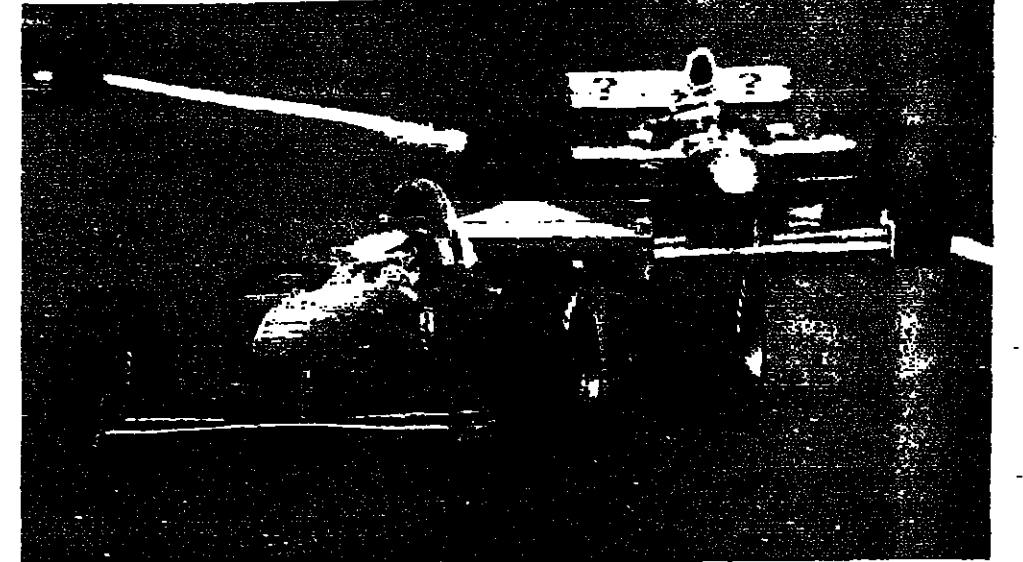
MAGNY-COURS, France (AFP) — Germany's two-time world champion Michael Schumacher won the French Grand Prix here on Sunday driving a Ferrari — extending his championship lead to 14 points over Williams driver Jacques Villeneuve.

Schumacher, winning his 25th Grand Prix and his third in the last four races, beat home compatriot Heinz-Harald Frentzen, driving a Williams, with Ulsterman Eddie Irvine, driving a Ferrari, finishing third.

The performances of Schumacher and Irvine open the way for Ferrari to win the driver's championship for the first time since Jody Scheckter won in 1979 and to take their first Constructors' Championship since 1983.

Villeneuve, who almost came to grief on the final bend, finished fourth just ahead of Frenchman Jean Alesi in a Benetton and Schumacher's younger brother Ralf completed a great day for the family by finishing sixth in the Jordan.

The 28-year-old Schumacher, who did not go a yard last year after his engine blew up on the grid,



German driver for Ferrari Michael Schumacher leads the Williams of Heinz Harald Frentzen around the Adelaide hairpin at the French Formula One Grand Prix at Magny Cours (Reuters photo)

led from the start and although he briefly handed the lead to Frentzen during two pit stops he dominated proceedings.

The only time that Frentzen mounted a serious challenge was when he cut the gap from 15 seconds to 13 seconds over two laps but Schumacher immediately replied by posting the fastest lap time.

Villeneuve, finishing only

his second race in five efforts, played his last gamble four laps from the finish when he changed his tyres to wets because of the pouring rain, but Schumacher gambled and stayed on the track despite lapping 10 seconds slower than some of the backmarkers.

The main battle took place for the fourth to sixth spots as first Ralf Schumacher, who had lost his third spot

on the grid because of a driving error, went off but got back onto the track on the 71st of the 72 laps, allowing David Coulthard and Alesi to pass him.

However, Coulthard, winner of the opening Australian Grand Prix, slid off on the final lap allowing the German to take sixth and complete a miserable day for the McLaren team, as Mika Hakkinen went out early on.

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CINEMA TEL:699238

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Jean Claude Van Damme ... in

MAXIMUM RISK

Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 5:00, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30

CINEMA TEL:677420

CONCORD

CONCORD "1"

Tom Cruise...in

JERRY MAGUIRE

Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:45

CONCORD "2"

Michael Jordan...in

SPACEJAM

Shows: 3:30, 6:00

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The actors are on annual leave The theatre will reopen July 2, 1997

Five women's seeds lose early on Wimbledon's middle Sunday

WIMBLEDON (AP) — Lindsay Davenport, Amanda Coetzer and Conchita Martinez were among five women's seeds eliminated Sunday as Wimbledon opened its gates on the traditional rest day for only the second time in history.

The fifth-seeded Davenport was ousted 7-5, 6-2 by Denisa Chladkova, a Czech player ranked 57th in the world who had never won a Grand Slam match before this tournament.

It was the second straight year that Davenport lost in the second round. "This week was so weird," the 21-year-old American said. "I played my first match Monday and to play again Sunday was definitely a throw-off. It was the same for everyone, but this was by far the weirdest and most difficult Grand Slam to go through so far."

Coetzer, the No. 6 seed from South Africa, won only three games in a 6-2, 6-1 loss to Canada's Patricia Hy-Boulais.

Coetzer came into the tournament with high hopes after reaching the semi-finals of the French Open last month.

Martinez, the 1994 champion who was seeded No. 10 this year, continued in her deep slump as she tumbled to a 6-4, 6-2 defeat to Helena Sukova. Martinez, who hasn't won a tournament in more than a year, was the only former women's champion in the draw.

The fourth seed to fall was No. 14 Brenda Schultz-McCarthy, the biggest server in women's tennis. In only a minor surprise, she lost 6-2, 6-3 to Belgium's Sabine Appelmans.

And No. 16 Barbara Paulus, the lowest seed, was ousted by Japan's Naoko Kijimuta, 5-7, 6-3, 6-3.

There were no problems for top-seeded Martina Hingis, who sailed into the third round with a 6-1, 6-3 triumph over American left-hander Nicole Arendt. Hingis closed out the 61-minute match with a forehand passing shot.

No. 2 Monica Seles was back on court against Kristina Brandt to resume a match that was suspended Saturday night after Brandt won the first set 7-5 and Seles was up 3-1 in the second. Third-seeded Jana Novotna and No. 9 Mary Pierce



Crowds on Centre Court do the Mexican Wave before the start of play on 'people's day' at the Wimbledon tennis championships. Play on the first Sunday of the tournament, normally a rest day, has been staged for only the second time in Wimbledon's history because of a backlog of games due to persistent rain (Reuters photo)



France's Mary Pierce, seeded number nine, plays a forehand return during her match against Virginia Ruano Pascual of Spain. Pierce won the match 6-0 2-6 6-3 (Reuters photo)

looked in danger of possible upsets but managed to scrape into the third round. Novotna pulled out a 6-1, 4-6, 6-4 win over Elena Likhovtseva, while Pierce took advantage of a key double fault at 4-3 in the third set to down Spain's Virginia Ruano-Pascual 6-0, 2-6, 6-3.

In other women's matches, eighth-seeded Arantxa Sanchez Vicario breezed into the third round with a 6-4, 6-2 win over Emmanuelle Gagliardi of Switzerland. No. 11 Mary Joe Fernandez posted a 6-4, 6-0 triumph over Aleksandra Olsza of Poland; and No. 12 Irina Spilaea downed Gigi Fernandez 6-3, 6-1.

In men's play, third-seed-

Court 1 tickets on sale for the same price, with 6,500 grounds passes for the outside courts at 5 pounds (\$8.25) each.

Many of the fans — who would normally never get a chance to get into Wimbledon — wore Union Jack T-shirts, funny hats, wigs and painted faces. Hundreds camped out overnight, while thousands more arrived at dawn to join the queue. By early morning, more than 20,000 people stood in the two lines stretching more than a mile in both directions. New arrivals were warned it could take at least four hours before they got inside.

"I've always wanted to come to Wimbledon but never had the chance before," said Janet Rutland, 48, who came with her two sons. "I absolutely love tennis and this is one of the highlights of my life."

Edwin Lee, 47, joined the back of the queue with his 16-year-old daughter, Hannah.

"There's just a sea of people," he said. "We can't see the end, but we'll get there eventually."

Once fans got through the gates, they sprinted to centre court to get their first choice of seats. While waiting for play to begin, they did the wave and sang "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot."

"I heard about this on BBC late yesterday afternoon," said 26-year-old Stuart Ward, who lives in Wimbledon. "I always love to come out here, and I enjoy the atmosphere."

Still, in contrast to 1991, the atmosphere was relatively muted on what was supposed to be a repeat of the festival-like conditions on the first "people's Sunday."

Youth World Cup Argentina oust Brazil

KUALA LUMPUR (AFP) — Defending champions Argentina stopped Brazil's spectacular run in the World Youth Football Championships with a 2-0 win in the quarter-finals on Sunday.

Both goals came in the last 10 minutes through substitutes Lionel Scaloni and Martin Perezlindo as Brazil continued to be dogged by the Argentine bogey in the biannual under-20 tournament.

Brazil had lost to Argentina 2-0 in the last World Youth final in Qatar two years ago and again in the South American qualifiers in February by the same margin.

But not many expected history to be repeated after Toninho Barroso's team notched up an incredible 25 goals in their first four matches, including 10 each against South Korea and Belgium.

Argentina kept the Brazilian defence under pressure

through the engrossing 90-minute encounter that produced swift counter attacks from both sides.

But luck deserted Brazil's forward line at a crucial time as first Adailton Martins, with 10 goals under his belt, and then Alex de Souza missed easy scoring opportunities.

The match, regarded by many as a virtual final between the two best teams in the tournament, appeared to be going into extra-time when Argentina struck.

Scaloni, who came on in the first half after an injury to captain Diego Maric, beat Brazilian goalkeeper Marcelo Moreira with a stunning shot from a narrow angle.

Another substitute Perezlindo, who replaced Diego Quintana, converted a pass from Pablo Aimar in the last minute to seal Argentina's victory.

A full house of 38,000 fans applauded the Argentinians, who did a lap of

honour round the stadium as the tearful Brazilian players left the field.

"I knew we could do it. We kept them under pressure through the game and were rewarded for some good work by the forwards," Argentina's coach Jose Pekerman said.

"It was a great game. It's a pity one team had to lose but thankfully it's not us. I am looking forward to the semi-finals," he added.

Argentina will stay in Kuching to await either Spain or Ireland in Wednesday's semi-final.

"It is difficult to get over this defeat. I mean we played so well all through the tournament and now suddenly it's all over," Barroso said.

"I think we missed too many scoring chances. But Argentina played well. Good luck to them for the semi-final," he added.

No problems for champion Helissio

PARIS (AFP) — Helissio, the 1996 European champion racehorse, put up a classy performance under new partner Cash Asmussen to take the Group One Grand Prix de Saint Cloud for the second successive year by five lengths here on Sunday.

The four-year-old colt, trained by Elie Lellouche for Spanish businessman Enrique Sarasola, beat home the Andre Fabre trained Magellano, ridden by Thierry Gilet, and outclassed English challenger Riyadian, trained by Paul Cole, was third three lengths back.

Helissio, who will attempt in October to become the

first horse to win a second successive Arc de Triomphe since alleged in 1977-78, ran his usual race setting the pace and was barely extended under Asmussen, as he cantered home to record his fifth group one triumph.

The victory will have given Asmussen, who was given the ride after fabre

and owner Daniel Wildenstein claimed regular jockey Olivier Peslier for Loup Sauvage in Sunday's Irish Derby, a boost as he had not been everyone's first choice replacement — though he will face a far harder test in July's King George VI and Queen Elizabeth Diamond Stakes at Ascot.

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For further information please contact Mrs. Khalida from Saturday to Wednesday (8:00 to 2:00) Tel. 699141/2 - Fax 685298

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF & TANNAN HIRSCH

YOU BE THE JUDGE

Neither vulnerable. North deals.

NORTH
♠ Q 6
♥ J 8 5
♦ A K Q 5 2
♣ K Q

WEST
♠ 9 8 4 2
♥ K Q 10 4 3
♦ 8
♣ 5 3 2

EAST
♠ K J 10
♥ 7 6 2
♦ 10 7 6 4
♣ A 6

SOUTH
♠ A 7 5 3
♥ A 9
♦ 9
♣ J 10 9 7 4

The bidding:
NORTH EAST SOUTH WEST
1♠ Pass 2♠ Pass
3♠ Pass 4♠ Pass

Opening lead: Queen of ♣
Study the bidding and play of this hand. Did anyone ask? If so, who?
South's two-club response is borderline, but North's two high honors in partner's suit improved the holding and fully justified a jump rebid of three diamonds. That caused problems for South, and the rebid of three no trump was prob-

ably the least of evils. Do you want to play or defend three no trump?
At the table, West made the expert lead of the queen of hearts, now standard from a holding of K Q 10. Declarer took the ace of hearts at trick one and played a club. East won the ace and reverted to hearts. West ducked to keep open communications with East, and the table's jack took the trick. Declarer cashed the king of clubs, came to hand with the ace of spades and ran winners, scoring in all one spade, two hearts, three diamonds and five clubs to make the game with two overtricks. What do you think of the play?
West could have defeated the contract by rising with the queen of hearts on the second lead of the suit and shifting to a spade. That would force out declarer's ace of spades while the clubs were still blocked, and there would be no way declarer could come to nine tricks.
East, however, must share the blame for allowing partner to go wrong. From East's point of view, the hand was an open book. After winning the ace of clubs at trick two, East should have shifted to the king of spades! If declarer holds up the ace, a spade continuation covers communications and the contract must fail at the cards lie.

Specific Procurement Notice THE HASHEMITE KINGDOM OF JORDAN

Pre-qualification Notice

Operation and Maintenance of Water and Wastewater Facilities Amman Governorate

The Water Authority of Jordan (WAJ) invites world-class, internationally experienced operator of water and wastewater utilities to participate in a pre-qualification process, which is currently planned to result in the award of a four-year management, operations and maintenance contract to aggressively improve the water and wastewater facilities in Amman, Jordan, and surrounding area, serving a population of approximately 1.6 million people. Only pre-qualified firms shall be eligible to receive a Request for Proposal.

The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan has applied for a loan from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), a portion of which would be used to finance part of the operations and maintenance contract. The balance of services to be provided by the operator will be financed by the revenues of the water and wastewater systems. Operators with previous experience in similar assignments in cities of comparable size are invited to pre-qualify for this assignment. Pre-qualification shall be based entirely upon capability and resources of respondents to perform the particular contract satisfactory taken, into account (i) experience and past performance in similar contract; (ii) capabilities with respect to personnel; and (iii) financial position.

Request for Pre-qualification documents and further information may be obtained on payment of a non-refundable fee of US\$300 through a wire transfer to the account of Water Authority of Jordan, at the Arab Bank/Jabal Amman branch; account number 100/67011. Please present your proof of payment and a letter requesting the documents by courier or by fax to:

Special Tendering Committee
P.O. Box 2412 - 5012
Amman 11183, Jordan
Attention: Eng. Saad Bakri
Telephone: 962-6-680-100/Ext. 454
Fax: 962-6-680-871

Responses to the Request for Pre-qualification must be submitted, in English, to the above address, by the closing date and time of 13:00 hours local time, on 4 August 1997.

Minister of Water & Irrigation
Head of Special Tendering Committee
for the Amman Water & Wastewater Management Contract
Dr. Munther Haddadin

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Handwritten signature: J. K. Kavar

Hong Kong enters last 24 hours of British rule

HONG KONG (AFP) — Hong Kong entered the final 24 hours of British rule Monday still at the centre of an international struggle over its future.

While the British colonial rulers pursued attempts to carry out a dignified withdrawal with all due pomp, concerns persisted over political freedoms when China reclaims the territory at midnight on Monday (1600 GMT).

The incoming administration of Tung Chee-Hwa announced that elections would be held in May next year. But the territory's democrats described the move as "a beautiful lie" by the chief executive-designate who has backed plans to scrap the current elected legislature.

And several ministers in Hong Kong for the grand hand-

over ceremonies highlighted the need for China to keep its promise to grant 50 years of autonomy and hold elections within a year of the momentous change.

U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright said America would closely monitor political developments in the territory.

"America cares about Hong Kong and will continue to care long after this week's fireworks are finished, the cameras are turned off and the partying is done," Ms. Albright told business leaders and diplomats.

Australian Foreign Minister Alexander Downer said Mr. Tung had promised "free, fair and democratic" polls during a meeting.

But Mr. Downer also warned China would suffer if it failed

to fulfil its promises.

"If it doesn't happen, it will have enormous implications for the stability of Hong Kong," he said. "I am sure that everybody's attitude to China and Beijing would change in that circumstance."

China has also faced Western criticism over its plan to bring 4,000 troops, with armoured vehicles, warships, and helicopters, into the territory six hours after the handover.

Mr. Tung has insisted that China had the right to bring in troops and that they would not be able to act against the Hong Kong people without his permission.

And nothing could stop Britain's withdrawal, with Prince Charles and outgoing Governor Chris Patten to leave the territory on the royal yacht

Britannia just after the midnight handover.

Prince Charles gave out British awards to the territory's people for the last time, while Mr. Patten went to mass and said many of his good-byes.

Mr. Tung will not attend Mr. Patten's official farewell ceremony Monday evening, but he has denied it is a snub. The future leader will instead be welcoming China's President Jiang Zemin and Premier Li Peng.

After a ceremonial dinner for 4,000 people, including Mr. Jiang, the prince and dozens of foreign ministers, the union flag will come down just before midnight and the Chinese red flag struck with five yellow stars will rise just after the official end of Britain's 156 years of sovereignty.



Soldiers of the Black Watch lower the British Union Jack at the Cenotaph in Hong Kong Friday. The Union Jack will be lowered here for the last time on Monday 1600 GMT when the colony is returned to China after 156 years of British rule (AFP Photo)

Israeli shock, speculation greet Sharon-PNA meeting

TEL AVIV (R) — Hawkish Israeli Cabinet Minister Ariel Sharon's allies voiced shock Sunday that the former general had secretly met a Palestinian leader close to President Yasser Arafat.

But other Israelis speculated that Mr. Sharon, 69, aimed to soften his headline image before assuming his highest job in government since a 1982 massacre of Palestinians forced his ouster as defence minister.

Mr. Sharon, tipped to be promoted to finance minister in Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's cabinet this week, has been perhaps the fiercest cabinet foe of peacemaking with the Palestine National Authority (PNA), branding Mr. Arafat a "war criminal."

Israel's Channel One broadcast news over the weekend that the burly Sharon, minister of national infrastructure, had this month met Mahmoud Abbas, a PNA architect of peace moves better known as Abu Mazen.

Mr. Sharon and Abu Mazen both refrained from commenting but Israeli and Palestinian officials confirmed the meeting. At his

Gaza headquarters Mr. Arafat said the meeting, aimed at reviving peace moves, was coordinated with him.

"It certainly is worrisome," Transport Minister Yitzhak Levy of the National Religious Party told Israeli army radio. "My worry is where is Mr. Sharon situated from a political standpoint."

Aharon Domb, secretary general of the Yesha Settlers Council, said he was at first "stunned" to learn of the meeting. Deputy Education Minister Moshe Peled of the Tsomet faction expressed "complete shock."

Mr. Sharon has been a champion of Jewish settlement in occupied lands which is viewed as an obstacle to peace by the Arab World and Israel's closest ally the United States.

Other policy makers questioned why they weren't at least informed of the 2-1/2-hour meeting at Sharon's southern Israeli ranch.

Foreign Minister David Levy, already deeply entrenched in a power struggle with Mr. Netanyahu over peacemaking responsibilities, cancelled a planned conciliatory

meeting with the Israeli leader Sunday over the disclosure.

Mr. Levy's brother, lawmaker Maxim Levy, told army radio: "The question is whether the deputy prime minister (David Levy) and defence minister must be surprised every morning by meetings such as these and others."

Mr. Netanyahu, 47, has lurched from crisis to crisis since he took power a year ago. His cabinet is in turmoil and peacemaking has crumbled over his expansion of Jewish settlement.

Israeli Arab lawmaker Abdul Wahab Darawshe, who brokered the Sharon-Abu Mazen meeting, said: "I heard a very positive report from both of them the day after the meeting...and they agreed to go on meeting."

Yossi Beilin, a leader of the opposition Labour Party which launched peace moves with the PNA, said: "It proves again that if in the Israel of 1997 you want to be part of the foreign and security policy establishment, you must meet PNA people."

"Sharon from this standpoint has proven that."

"The meeting and I imagine the timing of the leak were meant to show the world that look, I am not so extreme, I can speak with them," Mr. Beilin told Israeli radio. But he doubted Mr. Sharon or Mr. Netanyahu could break out of the crisis in peacemaking.

"I certainly see Sharon continuing to be a problem both from a symbolic standpoint and a standpoint of substance. His programme cannot be accepted by anyone. Maybe in Israel there are some who would accept it, but certainly not in the world."

Mr. Sharon demands a seat on Mr. Netanyahu's three-member "kitchen cabinet" which directs Israeli peace moves. Political sources say Mr. Levy and Defence Minister Yitzhak Mordechai both oppose giving Mr. Sharon a place on the inner team.

In 1983 a state inquiry forced Mr. Sharon out as defence minister after finding him indirectly responsible for the massacre of hundreds of Palestinians at two refugee camps near Beirut by pro-Israeli Christian militiamen.

U.S. industry, health groups and officials start round two of smoking negotiations

WASHINGTON (R) — The historic accord that tobacco companies and state officials bandished after months of negotiations looks less like the last word and more like an opening bid, legal experts and anti-smoking activists say.

The next round of negotiations is already under way. At this point, it is an indirect affair involving health groups, the industry, the White House and state officials all vying to shape the opinion of the public and of Congress.

It may be months before congressional committees sit down with precise proposals to turn the blueprint into Federal law.

In the meantime, everyone involved is trying to sort out the parties' public posturing from their true bottom line.

At this point, the most controversial aspects appear to be the breadth of the food and drug administration's jurisdiction over tobacco, the penalties the industry would have to pay if it failed to meet targets for cutting teenage smoking and limits to the industry's liability in court.

"I think the best interpretation is that the people who were negotiating on both sides are very smart, very good negotiators. No one expected this would be

the final deal," said Robert Kline, director of the Tobacco Control Legal Clinic at Northeastern Law School in Boston.

"They left enough wiggle room — and enough issues off the table — so they could move on to the next stage," he added.

"I keep telling people — this isn't a settlement, this is a proposal, a set of recommendations," said Scott Ballen, an anti-smoking activist. "It's still going to change."

Three months of negotiations between the tobacco industry and the state attorneys general suing them led to a sweeping deal in which cigarette manufacturers promised to pay out \$368 billion, partly to reimburse states for smoking-related health costs and partly to fund anti-smoking efforts.

The industry labelled it a "bitter pill" — although Wall Street analysts said the accord would give the tobacco companies the stability and certainty they sought.

But any initial attempt to portray the deal as a "take-it-or-leave-it" option dissipated like a puff of smoke. Even before the White House and Congress

reviewed the plan, public health organisations repudiated key elements, virtually ensuring that the package as initially drafted is a

no-starter on Capitol Hill. In particular, they found that the portion of the pact dealing with FDA authority was riddled with loopholes.

"It is woefully inadequate," said former Surgeon General C. Everett Koop, the co-chair with former FDA Commissioner David Kessler of an advisory council on tobacco including prominent public health groups like the American Heart Association, the American Cancer Society and the American Lung Association. The industry quickly sent out its own message that it remains ready to talk.

Meyer Koplow, a lawyer from a New York firm representing Philip Morris Co., told the Senate Judiciary Committee Thursday that the industry still wants a deal, and recognises that Congress must have a say in shaping it.

"These companies do not want to spend every day litigating everywhere with everyone about everything," Mr. Koplow testified. "There must be a better way."

"We recognise and understand that this is going to go through the legislative process," he said. "Obviously, there are parts of this that the indus-

try might find unacceptable to lose, and there are other provisions that the industry would find acceptable to see modified."

"We are reasonably optimistic that we'll be able to satisfy the comments, criticisms and desired changes that Congress may wish to make," he said.

Anti-tobacco lawmakers are gearing up for battle. Recalling the spectacle of tobacco industry executives swearing under oath in 1994 that nicotine is not addictive, they want a chance to run those questions by executives again before they sign off on any settlement.

"I hope we're going to have a hearing where we actually have the CEOs of the tobacco companies come up and stand before — sit before us and say, we lied, or my predecessor lied. And we know we're hooking kids. We intended to hook them, and we wanted to hook them," said Sen. Joseph Biden, a Democrat from Delaware.

Mr. Biden said lawmakers from both parties will take on the industry "with a feeling of relish." If the companies do not cooperate, he said, they will be driven out of business or "offshore with the cocaine dealers."

Saudi recognises U.S. jurisdiction over Dhahran explosion suspect

RIYADH (AFP) — Saudi Arabia Sunday recognised the right of the United States to hold and indict a Saudi national linked to the Dhahran bombing in June 1996 that killed 19 U.S. servicemen in the kingdom.

Defence Minister Prince Sultan Ben Abdul Aziz, quoted in the newspaper Okaz, said that the case of Hani Abdul Rahman Sayegh was "within the jurisdiction of the country to which he returned" after being deported from Canada.

It was an apparent climb down from an earlier statement from the deputy interior minister, Prince Ahmad Ben Abdul Aziz, that the kingdom was closely following the Sayegh case as he is a Saudi national.

But Prince Ahmad did not elaborate if Saudi Arabia, which does not have an extradition treaty with the United States, was seeking

access to Sayegh or to have him sent back to the kingdom.

Observers in Riyadh said the defence minister's comments appeared to signal that Saudi Arabia — which the United States has accused of not sharing the results of its investigation into the bombing — would not demand his return.

On June 17, Canada deported the 28-year-old Saudi to the United States, from which he had entered the other north American country asking for political asylum.

Sayegh has been indicted on charges of conspiring to kill Americans in Saudi Arabia in 1994 and 1995, rather than the June 25, 1996 truck bombing of a U.S. air force housing complex in the eastern city of Dhahran.

In exchange, Sayegh has agreed to cooperate in the

investigation into the Dhahran bombing.

He has already implicated at least one senior Iranian official in planned attacks on U.S. targets in Saudi Arabia, the Washington Post reported Saturday.

It said he told U.S. law enforcement officials that an intelligence officer named Ahmad Sherifi was the architect of a bombing plot in 1995 that was never carried out.

U.S. intelligence officials believe the Dhahran bombing was a variation on the earlier plot, according to the Post.

On the bombing anniversary, Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Director Louis Freeh called for "intensified cooperation" with Saudi Arabia, following complaints from the FBI before the Sayegh arrest of a lack of information from Riyadh.

Father, four children die in Tasmania murder-suicide

HOBART (R) — An Australian man appears to have stabbed his four children to death and then shot himself dead in a murder-suicide at a farmhouse in the island state of Tasmania, local police said Sunday.

Police found the bodies of the four victims, aged from about 6 years to 18, in the bedrooms of the house Sunday morning. The body of their middle-aged father was found outside the sandstone cottage, in the rural hamlet of Cambridge near the state capital Hobart.

Police said it appeared the man killed his four children with a knife before shooting himself in the head.

"We believe that the family members suffered knife wounds," police spokesman Geoff Easton told Reuters.

Local media said a severed hand was found on a tree stump on the property, where the father also ran a carpentry business. "A hand was amputated," Mr. Easton said. He did not elaborate.

Police would not speculate Sunday on the motive behind the murder-suicide. The killings took place about 50 kilometres northwest of Tasmania's historic Port Arthur tourist attraction where in April last year 35 people were shot dead in modern Australia's worst mass murder.

Ancient Egyptians loved jokes about drinking, nudity

LONDON (AFP) — Ancient Egyptians loved jokes about drinking, vomiting and women lifting up their skirts, a London magazine said Monday.

"Visually it was pretty basic, with references to drunkenness and exposing yourself," Carol Andrews, assistant keeper of the British museum's department of Egyptian antiquities, told Mag, the magazine of London's museums and galleries.

A favourite example of an Egyptian gag discovered on the Westcar Papyrus now in Berlin asks "what's the best way to entertain a bored Pharaoh?"

The answer: "To sail a boatload of his Harem dressed in fishing nets up the Nile and then tell him to go fishing."

The enjoyment of strong drink is another recurrent theme. At the tomb of Pahery at Elkab in Egypt there is a picture of a partygoer, a high-born woman, pleading: "Give me 18 jugs of wine — I want to get drunk, my insides are as dry straw."

Mr. Andrews, who has spent 25 years gathering examples of ancient Egyptian comedy, said another example of ancient Egyptian humour can be found in the tale of Re — the chairman of the council of gods.

"He was told 'your shrine is empty' by Baba, which was a big insult to the king of gods, and he refused to sit on the council."

"Then his daughter Hathor lifts up her skirt: he laughs uncontrollably and goes back to the council."



Ontario store goes topless

WASAGA BEACH (R) — Canada's growing obsession with its topless debate shifted from the streets to the stores Saturday when the first topless shop opened in this popular Ontario resort town. Crowds of gaping onlookers gathered as several customers — both women and men — agreed to shop topless to promote the opening of Tina's topless surf sport, a clothing store fronting Wasaga Beach's most popular strip of beach. "It's a free-spirited store," said shop owner David Blackstone, 35. He said he decided to make the store "top optional" after the Ontario court of appeal in December overturned the conviction of a woman who was charged with indecency after she walked topless down an Ontario street in 1991.

Princess Diana denies she is engaged to Pakistani doctor

LONDON (AFP) — Princess Diana on Saturday denied press reports that she was "unofficially" engaged to a London-based Pakistani heart specialist. "The Princess of Wales has not become engaged to Dr. Hasnat Khan, officially or unofficially," said a Kensington Palace spokesman. The denial came in response to a report to appear in Sunday's press that said Diana, who was divorced from the Prince of Wales last year, had become engaged to Khan after she won the approval of his family during a visit to Pakistan. The Sunday Mirror claimed 37-year-old Khan had agreed to marry Diana if she could persuade his mother to agree to the wedding. So the Princess reportedly visited Khan's family when she was in Pakistan last month to raise funds for former cricket hero Imran Khan's charity cancer hospital in the northern city of Lahore. The tabloid weekly alleged that Diana and the doctor had been spending intimate weekends in the home of Khan's relatives in the central English town of Stratford-upon-Avon.

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Sunken ship from 1916 found; valuable cargo of liquor on board

STOCKHOLM (AFP) — A Swedish freighter sunk in 1916 by the Germans while on a mission carrying a big French champagne and cognac consignment to the Russian imperial army has been traced. Divers who have been down to the 25-metre Ketch Joenkeoping say the ship is still intact, leading to hopes its valuable cargo of 36,000 litres of cognac, 5,000 bottles of champagne and 6,000 litres of red wine may also be intact. A German U22 submarine sank the ship in the bay of Finland with an explosive charge on November 3, 1916, on finding out it was also carrying material to repair railways. According to the Swedish consortium C Star that led the search, the more than 80-year-old cognac, champagne and wine could sell for up to \$65 million at an auction.

Charles Dickens reappears in Swedish library

HUDIKSVALL (AFP) — Charles Dickens recently checked out a copy of "The Pickwick Papers" at a Swedish library, raising a few eyebrows as he handed over his library card. Charles Dickens, a Swedish forerunner, is the great great grandson of the first cousin of the author Charles Dickens. According to the paper Hudiksvalls Tidning, the Swedish Charles Dickens has researched his family history and discovered that Matthew Dickens, who was an engineer, moved from England to Sweden before returning to England after just a few years.